

The Brooklyn Paper

Brooklyn's Real Newspaper

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BROOKLYN HEIGHTS-DOWNTOWN-NORTH BROOKLYN
INCLUDING CARROLL GARDENS, COBBLE HILL, BOERUM HILL, DUMBO, WILLIAMSBURG AND GREENPOINT

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Bruce Ratner has pulled out of a plan for Brooklyn's tallest building.

RATNER KILLS MR. BROOKLYN

By Gersh Kuntzman
The Brooklyn Paper

Developer Bruce Ratner has pulled out of a deal with City Tech that could have netted him hundreds of millions of dollars and allowed him to build the city's tallest residential tower, the so-called Mr. Brooklyn. The Brooklyn Paper has learned.

"It was a mutual decision," said a key executive at the City University of New York, which would have paid Ratner \$300 million to build a new dorm and lab for City Tech and given him a prime plot at the corner of Tillary and Jay streets where he reportedly hoped to build the 100-story, Renzo Piano-designed building.

"Both sides agreed that the

EXCLUSIVE

costs had escalated and the numbers showed that we should not go down that road," added the executive, who did not wish to be identified.

Costs had indeed escalated. In 2005, CUNY agreed to pay Ratner \$16 million to build the 11- to 14-story classroom-dormitory and also to hand over the lucrative development site where City Tech's Kilgore Auditorium now sits.

Then in December, CUNY raised Ratner's fee to \$307 million with no explanation.

"Ratner's 'Mr. Brooklyn' deal gets overruled," The Brooklyn Paper headline read.

Sull, it's likely that Ratner willingly got out of the deal in



Bruce Ratner

light of the nation's ongoing credit crunch (see story below) and his own shaky finances, said Councilman David Yassky.

"He may be overextended

right now," said Yassky (D-Brooklyn Heights). "Look, a lot of developers are re-evaluating their numbers and feel that residential buildings don't work right now," he said.

Yassky called Ratner's withdrawal "good news" for Brooklyn.

"A residential building at that corner was an awkward fit," said Yassky. "A lot of planners see that site as ideal for a significant office building."

Forest City Ratner did not return two messages from The Brooklyn Paper.

The CUNY official said the dorm and lab would still be built — but no longer as a public-private partnership.

"We'll build it in partnership with the state Dormitory Authority," the executive said.



Non-Brooklynite Leigh-Taylor Smith was crowned Miss Brooklyn on Saturday by Miss New York 2007 Elisabeth Baldanza. True "Miss Brooklyn" is pictured below.

Fed cash crunch threatens 'affordable' A'Yards homes

By Dana Rubinstein
The Brooklyn Paper

Thousands of including some of the 2,250 rentals that Bruce Ratner promised to include in his Atlantic Yards mega-development — will not be built due to a huge shortfall in federal subsidies available for low-cost housing creation, The Brooklyn Paper has learned.

It would take between \$6 and \$7 billion in federal grants to build all the proposed affordable units in all of the pending projects in the state — roughly five times more money than is available, according to Mike Slattery, the senior vice president at the Real Estate Board of New York.

Indeed, in 2007, the feds only granted \$1.3 billion in such bonds — and those numbers won't change significantly in 2008.

"There's a lot more demand for affordable housing projects these days and there's not enough money available," said Joe Chan, the president of the Downtown Brooklyn Partnership, the quasi-governmental group that oversees the redevelopment of the long-languishing

area bounded by Tillary, Fulton and Jay streets and Flatbush Avenue Extension.

"We're at risk of seeing less affordable housing than" originally planned, he continued.

The trouble is most worrisome to supporters of Atlantic Yards, the 16-scraper-and-arena project, whose main selling point was its proposed 2,250 units of below-market-rate housing.

ing. To finance those units, Ratner will need \$1.4 billion in subsidies over several years, according to state documents.

And that money is not available, experts say.

"It's highly unlikely Forest City Ratner will be able to get the amount of subsidies that would go with the amount of affordable housing," said Councilman David Yassky (D-Brooklyn Heights).

Forest City Ratner did not respond to a request for comment about how it would line up financing for its affordable housing units given that other developers are having such difficulty getting those coveted loans.

Then again, the developer has approached neither the city nor the state about affordable housing bonds. Most developers have already held such talks at this stage

in the process, experts said.

Although Ratner hasn't even applied for the money, the president of the city's Housing Development Corporation says he's not worried about Atlantic Yards.

"Given the scale of the project... we're not concerned that the money won't be there," Marc Jahr told The Post last week.

See RATNER on page 7

Bonds bombshell killing projects

The Explainer

How does the process work?

A developer who includes affordable units in his or her development can apply to the city or state for tax-exempt bonds.

How many bonds are available?

Developers in New York State are seeking \$6 billion to \$7 billion in such bonds this year, yet only \$1.3 billion is available.

Why such big demand?

Partly because developers know they

A shortage of federal money designed to spur the development of affordable housing may endanger up to 3,000

lower-priced apartments in Downtown Brooklyn. But what exactly is going on? Let The Explainer explain:

What will happen to the units if the bonds aren't there?

Some of them won't get built.

Can Bruce Ratner really back away from that promise?

Yes, if he writes a \$500,000 check — a small amount for his \$3.6 billion company — to the housing group, ACORN, which signed Ratner's Community Benefits Agreement in 2005.

Hil's B'klyn superdelegates to rescue

By Mike McLaughlin
The Brooklyn Paper

Two of Brooklyn's superdelegates say they'll vote for Sen. Hillary Clinton at the Democratic convention even though the majority of voters in their districts cast ballots for Sen. Barack Obama in the New York primary.

Both Rep. Ed Towns (D-Brooklyn Heights) and Rep. Yvette Clarke (D-Park Slope) said they still back Clinton's flagging campaign — despite representing districts where Obama dominated on Feb. 5.

Clarke, in a statement, said she "is a committed superdelegate to Hillary Clinton." She added that her role as a superdelegate is not simply to follow the lead of her constituents.

"Superdelegates have the unique re-

sponsibility to balance the needs of their district, state, party and country," she said.

She refused to take any questions and did not say anything beyond her statement.

Towns explained his support for Clinton in an interview with the New York Times, though he refused to return repeated calls from The Brooklyn Paper.

The district might have gone for Obama, but the state voted for Hillary," he told the Times. "And no matter what, she is the senator from the state."

The close battle between Obama and Clinton has put the role of the superde-



PHOTO: GUY LAWRENCE

gates under scrutiny. If the remaining primary voting continues as it has gone so far, neither candidate may have looked up the required 2,025 delegates to win the nomi-

nation outright.

That's when the 795 superdelegates — party leaders, members of Congress and other political insiders — come into play. Many have longstanding ties to the Clinton family — indeed, one superdelegate is former President Bill Clinton — and they vote any way they want.

Clinton won Brooklyn by a 50-48 percent vote. But Obama won big in Clarke and Towns's districts, taking 56 percent of the vote in Clarke's 11th District, which covers Park Slope, Prospect Heights and Crown Heights. He tallied 57 percent in Towns's 10th District, which stretches from Brooklyn Heights to East New York.

After hearing about Clarke and Towns's continued support for Clinton, Assemblywoman Hakereem Jeffries (D-Fort

See DELEGATES on page 8



Julia Velstein
Park Slope



Nicole Clark
East Flatbush



Carlon Alexandra
Brooklyn Heights

Miss B'klyn is from ... Manhattan

By Mike McLaughlin
The Brooklyn Paper

There she is... Miss Manhattan! The Miss Brooklyn pageant — a stepping stone to the Miss America crown — reappeared after a 16-year absence last week and was plunged immediately into controversy because the winner is a queen who's not from Kings.

Leigh-Taylor Smith, 22, captured the sparkling tiara Saturday afternoon and promptly whisked it across the East River, forcing the borough to wait at least another year before it can crown one of its daughters with top honors.

This is fantastic! Smith said, seconds after the crown was settled atop her perfectly coiffed brown mane.

There were only seven contestants, but the Miss Brooklyn pageant was every bit the precursor to Miss America, ranking the belles on their appearance in a swimsuit and evening wear, their talent in a song-and-dance number, and their intelligence in interviews with four judges (thankfully, none of the competitors said she'd work for "world peace").

The judges lobbed some softball questions to the contestants — "What do you do on your downtime?" asked one judge — but went after others with curveballs.

One official wanted to know whether women who've had cosmetic surgery should be disqualified from such pageants, the equivalent of asking should baseball players who use steroids be banned from the major leagues.

"I don't think so," said Theresa Tokarowski, explaining that some women choose surgery to "be more comfortable" or "correct problems."

The talent portion of the program ranged from tap-dancing to opera arias to a comedic bit about a Jewish secretary who embarks on a hip-hop career.

"I'll be the first rapper with an exclusively clerical content," joked Julia Velstein, a Park Sloper.

She got laughs, but it was Smith who tore the roof off the Kumbie Theater at Long Island University on Flatbush Avenue Extension, where tickets were going for \$30 a pop. Smith's rendition of "Nobody Does It Like Me," from the musical "Seesaw," was amazingly appropriate (given its inappropriateness, that is).

"It's about being incapable of being a lady at all times," Smith said. It was an odd choice for Smith, whose main qualification for being Miss Brooklyn — other than her looks, talent and charm — is that she is a parishioner at the Brooklyn Tabernacle on the Fulton Mall in Downtown.

Plus, she's made the hall to Junior's and the Coney Island Boardwalk since moving to New York after graduating from the University of Virginia last year.

Living in Manhattan, it's nice to come to a low-key place like Brooklyn," she told The Brooklyn Paper.

Before Brooklynites take umbrage at Smith's victory, partisans should remember that it is the first time that a woman from Brooklyn has won the Miss Brooklyn Scholarship Program. "We couldn't have a contest with only three girls."



A detail of the hardy rock Masonic Temple.

'Temple' of rock 'n' roll in Fort Greene

By Dana Rubinstein
The Brooklyn Paper

Masons — a group long associated with opaque rituals, secretive vows of brotherhood, and, of course, the Founding Fathers — are now becoming associated with something more modern: rock and roll.

The Brooklyn Masonic Temple, the 101-year-old, 12-story brick, marble and terra cotta cube of a building on the

corner of Clermont and Lafayette avenues, has been hosting concerts promoted by boomBOOM Presents.

The promoter, Brice Rosenbloom, is not a Mason, though his grandfather was. So when a concert organizer asked Rosenbloom to find a venue for a six-year Fort Greene resident thought the beautiful old temple might be just the place.

And Brother Frank Porter, the Grand Deputy Inspector General of the Empire State Grand Council, said the famously secretive society was open to the idea.

"I figured we'd give it a shot," said Porter. "So far, so good."

Beirut and the Bard String Quartet inaugurated the Temple as a music venue on Sept. 20. The concert sold out.

On Jan. 24 and 25, the Temple hosted two performances of Ne-

rosis, a post-metal rock band.

While Rosenbloom and Porter said the temple-concert arrangement was working out well, one inside source said the Masons were less than pleased with some of the Neosis concertgoers.

"The crowd was completely disrespectful," said the source, who didn't want his name used.

"It was like a frat party. There was spilled beer every-

where. Everyone was smoking weed and cigarettes. People were peeing in the hallway."

Rosenbloom agreed that the behavior was "inappropriate," but says he's taken steps to ensure that there won't be an encore as concerts continue.

On Thursday, the Temple will host Balkan Beat Box. Rosenbloom said there would be two or three concerts a month.

And even if Rosenbloom's clients have little regard for the space, Rosenbloom, for one, recognizes its "special" char-

acter.

On a recent weekday, he met visitors inside the temple's tall, arched foyer, which is hung with faded banners, one celebrating the 100th anniversary of the temple.

The auditorium itself, off the foyer, was set up for an event, with 30 long tables, covered in white tablecloths, red chairs arranged in long, neat rows.

Rock concerts are new to the temple.

See ROCK on page 7



They're doing rock shows at the Masonic Temple in Fort Greene.

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5-6 Gallery: Ever wonder how a million \$ print was made? Printmaking Demonstration. 6:30-7:30pm FREE

Brooklyn Arts Council presents Brooklyn Maqom Arab Music Festival "Tuning Your Ear" Arab Music Workshop & Jam with Karim Naji, Michel Mene Bakou, Middle Eastern Percussion Ensemble, Gomal Shafik & Mohamed Yhya. 8:30-8:30pm FREE at Site 1 Gallery

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For more information, email: culture@111twoes-dumbo.com

Subway Directions: To York St. (A) to High St. (Cadmans Plaza W exit) (D) to Clark St.

BROOKLYN CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS AT BROOKLYN COLLEGE 2007-2008 SEASON

Richmond Ballet The State Ballet of Virginia WORKS BY JESSICA LANG An evening of New York premieres Saturday, March 1, 2008 at 8pm "visually stunning" — Dance Magazine

Program support provided by: NYCTC LILA ACHESON WALLACE THEATRE FUND Marknos Foundation for Dance

Walt Whitman Theatre at Brooklyn College, 2900 Campus Road, Brooklyn (on-site parking available)

Tickets and info: www.BrooklynCenterOnline.org Box Office: 718-951-4500 (Tues-Sat, 1pm-6pm)

WHERE TO GO

EDITORS' PICKS

<p>WEDNESDAY February 27</p> <p>Let's dance It might not grow peaches, but Georgia — the country, folks, not the state — sure does produce dancers. Tonight, the 200-year-old State Ballet of Georgia will kick off its run at BAM with two new works, and "Och-ah-ah" by fellow Georgian, George Balanchine.</p> <p>7:30 pm at the Brooklyn Academy of Music, 30 Lafayette Ave., at Ashland Place in Fort Greene, \$20. \$70. Through March 2. For information, call (718) 636-4100 or visit www.bam.org.</p>	<p>FRIDAY February 29</p> <p>Look & 'Leap' It's only once every four years that February gets an extra day, and you should celebrate accordingly. Tonight at Trash Bar in Williamsburg, "The Second Quadrennial Leap Year's Rock & Roll Dance Party" offers an open bar from 8 to 9 pm, the Candy Snatchers (pictured) and DJs. This is one party that's worth 'Leap'ing for.</p> <p>8 pm at Trash Bar (256 Grand St. at Roebing Street in Williamsburg). \$10. For information, call (718) 599-1000 or visit www.thetrashbar.com.</p>	<p>SATURDAY March 1</p> <p>Lady's day The Brooklyn Museum's "First Saturday" series celebrates Women's History Month with Colombian singer Lucia Pulido (pictured), a dance performance from Ballet Folklórico Peru and a guided tour of "Love Has No End," the retrospective of work by artist Ghada Amer.</p> <p>6 pm at the Brooklyn Museum, 200 Eastern Pkwy. at Washington Avenue in Prospect Heights. Free. For information, call (718) 638-5000 or visit www.brooklynmuseum.org.</p>	<p>THURSDAY March 6</p> <p>Forget me not Kevin Walsh wrote a whole book about the history of our city, "Forgotten New York," and tonight he'll make it local in a multimedia presentation at Word Bookstore. Walsh will give attendees a peek at what Greenpoint was like long before restaurants and boutiques dotted Franklin Street.</p> <p>7:30 pm at Word Bookstore (125 Franklin St. at Milton Street in Greenpoint). Free. For information, call (718) 383-0099 or visit www.wordbrooklyn.com.</p>	<p>FRIDAY March 7</p> <p>Feeling green Not since the Partridge Family packed up its bus and drove off into the sunset has a family band been met with such adoration as Leahy. The eight Canadian brothers and sisters that make up the step-dancing, Celtic-influenced group will help you get your St. Paddy's Day groove on.</p> <p>8 pm at the Walt Whitman Theatre at Brooklyn College (2900 Campus Rd. at Hill Place in Midwood). \$25-\$75. For information, call (718) 951-4500.</p>
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12 DAYS IN BROOKLYN

Compiled by Susan Rosenthal Jay

WEDS, FEB 27

ONE-POT MEALS: The Center for Kasher Culinary Arts offers a class in how to use a slow cooker, 5:30 to 7:30 pm, 1407 Conny Island Ave. (718) 692-4442.

BOOK COURT: Reading by author Jean Attanberg from her novel, "The Kapt Man." Also, Javier Erasmus reading by author "You Found Her A Memoir." 7 pm, 163 Court St. (718) 875-3077. Free.

BAM: Brooklyn Academy of Music presents Nina Ananishvili and the State Ballet of Georgia, \$20 to \$70. 7:30 pm, Howard Gilman Opera House, 30 Lafayette Ave. (718) 636-4100.

THURS, FEB 28

SUPPORT: NY Methodist Hospital offers a surgical weight reduction information seminar and support group. A doctor will perform surgical weight reduction surgery, 5:30 pm to 7:30 pm, 506 Sixth St. (718) 780-7797. Free.

BOOK COURT: Reading by author Rachel Cline from "My Last." 7 pm, 163 Court St. (718) 875-3077. Free.

GREEN HOUSE CONVERSATIONS: Discussion: "Green, Greener, Greener: Approaches to Living Green in NYC." 7 pm to 9 pm, 361 Manhattan Ave. www.greenhouseconversations.com.

READING: Freehold Books hosts a series on popular culture and presents Richard J. Ziegler, author of "Comedy at the Edge: How Stand-Up in the 1970s Changed America." 7:30 pm, 123 Columbia St. (718) 643-8484. Free.

JAZZ AT BARGE: Jeff Newell, Tisa Woods and Marcus Ripley play jazz, 8:30 to 10:30 pm, 520 students, 6 pm, Fulton Ferry Landing, Old Fulton Street at the East River (718) 624-0083.

THEATER: "Take Me Out." 7:30 pm. See Sat, March 1.

THE BRICK: "Notes from Underground: A Digging Play." 8 pm. See Sat, March 1.

FRI, FEB 29

BAM: Brooklyn Academy of Music presents Nina Ananishvili and the State Ballet of Georgia, \$20 to \$70. 7:30 pm, Howard Gilman Opera House, 30 Lafayette Ave. (718) 636-4100.

GOOD COFFEEHOUSE: Truogeddy Series presents Chuck Brodsky \$15, \$6 for children, 8 pm, 53 Prospect Park West (718) 768-2972.

FACULTY SHOWCASE: Brooklyn Conservatory hosts a concert with Oran Etkin, \$10, 8 pm, 25 Montauk St. (718) 622-3300.

ART SHOW: New works, new interpretations, new artists at Lemurage, \$5, 8 pm to 11 pm, 461 Third Ave. (718) 576-1066.

ADOPT AN ANIMAL: The Animal Care and Control of New York City brings \$5 of their animals to be adopted, 8 and a Tail, 240 Seventh Ave. (718) 632-2717.

THEATER: "Take Me Out." 7:30 pm. See Sat, March 1.

CONCERT: St. Ann's Warehouse presents "The Dreamers," a concert with John Zorn, 8 pm. See Sat, March 1.

DANCE: Above and Beyond Dance performs at Kumble Theatre, 8 pm. See Sat, March 1.

FIRST WEEKEND: at Brooklyn Arts Exchange, 8 pm. See Sat, March 1.

THE BRICK: "Notes from Underground: A Digging Play." 8 pm. See Sat, March 1.

REUNION: Former "Life Line" are invited to reconnect during a 25th anniversary celebration and performance taking place in May 2008. For info, call (718) 788-3500.

Love songs: On Sunday, March 2, as part of its "Tribute to FC Films," BAMcinematek will screen "Love Songs," the 2007 film by director Christophe Honoré. After the film, Honoré and actor Louis Garrel will participate in a Q&A.

SAT, MARCH 1

OUTDOORS AND TOURS

WALKING TOUR: Tour Park Slope, \$25, \$15 kids, 10 am and 1:30 pm. Call for meeting info. (212) 209-3300.

ICE SKATING: at Prospect Park's Wollman Rink, \$5, \$3 kids and seniors, \$6 skate rental. Sessions at 10 am to 1 pm; 2 pm to 6 pm; 7 pm to 10 pm. Enter at Lincoln Road and Ocean Avenue. (718) 965-8999.

PUBLIC SKATING: at Aviator Sports, \$6, \$4 kids, \$4 skate rental. Noon to 3 pm, 3:30 pm to 6:30 pm and 7 pm to 11 pm. Hangar 5, Floyd Bennett Field. (718) 758-7500.

HISTORY ON THE HILL: Explore Fort Greene Park, and take a look at the park's place in history. 1 pm. Fort Greene Park. Enter park at Myrtle Avenue and Washington Park. (718) 722-5218. Free.

PERFORMANCE

DANCE: Above and Beyond Dance presents a concert dance blending modern dance with jazz and circus acrobatic work, \$20, \$10 kids, 3 pm and 8 pm. Kumble Theatre at Long Island University corner of Flatbush Avenue Extension and Cadogan Avenue. (718) 488-1404.

MUSICAL REVUE: Ridge Repertory Company presents "From Broadway to Bay Ridge: a movie of show-stopping moments," \$20, 8 pm. Bay Ridge Jewish Center, corner of Fourth Avenue and First Street. (718) 836-3103.

CBGB: Brooklyn Center for the Performing Arts presents The Richmond Ballet with work by choreographer Jessica Lang. \$25, half price for children 10 and younger. 2 pm, Walt Whitman Theatre on the campus of Brooklyn College, one block from the junction of Flatbush and Nostrand avenues. (718) 951-4500.

OPERA: Regira Opera hosts a fully staged production of Verdi's "La Traviata," sung in Italian. \$20, \$15 seniors, \$5 teens, kids free. 7 pm. Regina Hall, 658 Street and 12th Avenue. (718) 232-9536.

BAM: Brooklyn Academy of Music presents Nina Ananishvili and the State Ballet of Georgia, \$20 to \$70. 7:30 pm, Howard Gilman Opera House, 30 Lafayette Ave. (718) 636-4100.

CIVIC CALENDAR

WEDNESDAY, FEB. 27

DUMBO Neighborhood Association: On the agenda: the proposed new DUMBO Historic District from "Prospect Park" development, powerhouse Arena (37 Main St., at Water Street, in DUMBO), 10:30 am. For info, e-mail dumbonighborhood@earthlink.net.

Community Board 2: Youth, Education and Cultural Affairs Committee. Long Island University (Delia Avenue at Flatbush Brooklyn), 6 pm. Call (718) 596-5410 for info.

Bensonhurst West End Community Council: FIAO Beacon Center at 15 94 09 Ave. P at West 11th Street in Bensonhurst, 8 pm. Call (718) 944-6234 for info.

Community Board 6: Parks and Recreation Committee. On the agenda: restoration of J.J. Byrne Park, Old Stone House (18th Avenue between Third and Fourth streets in Park Slope), 6:30 pm. Call (718) 643-3027 for info.

THURSDAY, FEB. 28

Brooklyn Bridge Park Workshop: Share your ideas on what should happen at Brooklyn Bridge Park. Long Island College Hospital (Delia Avenue at Flatbush Brooklyn), 6 pm. Call (718) 596-5410 for info.

Department of Education: Town hall meetings on eighth-grade promotion policy. Brooklyn Technical HS, 209 Fort Greene Pl., between Delia Avenue and Fulton Street in Fort Greene, call (212) 374-2425 for info.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 5

Community Board 2: Health Committee. Methodist Hospital (Delia Avenue at St. Felix Street in Fort Greene), 6 pm. Call (718) 596-5410 for info.

THURSDAY, MARCH 6

Park Slope Civic Council: Community forum on lighting climate change. Old First Reformed Church (Seventh Avenue and Canal Street in Park Slope), 7 pm. Call (718) 632-2717 for info.

Friends of Carroll Park: Monthly meeting. The Park House (just east of Smith Street between Canal and President streets in Carroll Gardens), 7:30 pm. E-mail friends@carrollparkphotos.com for info.

To list an event in the Civic Calendar: e-mail Newsroom@BrooklynPaper.com.

SUNDAY, MARCH 2

Protect your home: State Sen. Eric Adams hosts an all-day workshop to help homeowners avoid foreclosure. Medgar Evers College (1650 Bedford Ave., between Crown and Montgomery streets in Crown Heights), noon. Call (718) 284-4700 for information.

TUESDAY, MARCH 4

76th Precinct Community Council: Monthly meeting. 76th Precinct matshouse (191 Union St., between Henry and Hicks streets in Carroll Gardens), 7:30 pm. E-mail friends@carrollparkphotos.com for info.

SN1 Newspaper of the Year 2007

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Brooklyn's Real Newspaper

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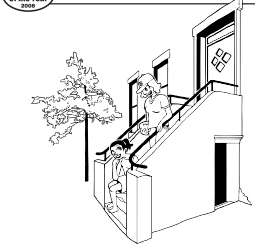
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THE Still

NEIGHBORHOOD REPORT

GOWANUS



A big 'Toll' on the Gowanus Canal

By Mike McLaughlin
The Brooklyn Paper

The dream of a Gowanus Canal lined with homes and esplanades instead of oil companies and junkyards took a step forward as a developer of suburban McMansions unveiled its vision for a 447-unit development that actually uses the fetid canal as a selling point.

Toll Brothers, the famed builder of suburban, cookie-cutter-style mansions, filed plans with the city on Feb. 7 to lend its luxury brand name to a project that mixes in 130 below-market-rate apartments, retail space and a public esplanade along the famously filthy "waterway" between Carroll and Second streets.

The developer says its proximity to the Gowanus is the signature element of the project, despite the fact that this corpse of water is synonymous with fetid smells and floating garbage.

"The location is the key to its success, really," said David Van Spronsen, a Toll Brothers vice president. "Being within Carroll Gardens, two blocks from Smith Street and two blocks from the subway is great."

Before the Toll Brothers can build any residential buildings, however, the company needs a zoning change. And to get that, the company will need to undertake an environmental impact review that will take more than a year to complete. The process won't start until the Department of City Planning says all the details of the Toll Brothers proposal is in order, a ruling that is expected to come in the next few weeks.

After that, everyone from the Community Board to the City Council gets to weigh in and, possibly, force Toll Brothers to alter its plan or make concessions.

One source of some immediate concern was the size of the project, which calls for two, 12-story buildings along the Canal. On

Bond Street, the western boundary of the site, the building height drops to six stories. Others, however, pointed out that such density creates advantages.

"One hundred thirty units of affordable housing is very positive for the community," said Bob Zuckerman, director of the Gowanus Canal Community Development Corporation. "It's not as high as we would like, but it's significantly higher than it could have been."

Opponents don't want developers to set a precedent for big buildings that drive out local businesses or destroy architectural history.

"As a borough, we probably need to take a step back and figure out what we want to do with the canal," said Eric McClure, a member of Park Slope Neighbors. "There's some great industrial architecture. I'd hate to see it turned into a cookie-cutter, mixed-use village."

GREENPOINT

Everyone in the pool — for real

By Dana Rubinstein
The Brooklyn Paper

This time, the restoration of the McCarren Park Pool is really going to happen. No, really.

Park Department officials promised as much on Feb. 13 when they unveiled new renderings of a lushly restored pool — though many in the community greeted the gorgeous pictures with an arched eyebrow.

"I hope it happens, but so far, not much has actually happened," said Laura Hoffman, a long-time Greenpointer. "Who knows if it'll actually get built?"

There's been a lot of talk and a lot of nice planning over the years. In 1984, two restoration plans have wended their way through the bureaucratic maze, only to be quashed by unforeseen events.

In 1985, preservationists killed plans for a year-round recreation center and Olympic-sized pool at the site — already funded with \$10 million — arguing that the bathhouses on either side of the iconic arched entryway should be preserved.

Monument picked up again to reopen the pool in the late 1990s, culminating in 2001 with the similar, though pricier, \$2.1-million "Wilmer Plan." Community activists were foiled again, this time by 9-11.

This time, the Bloomberg administration has allocated \$50 million toward the restoration of the pool. Officials say construction should begin by early next year.

"Although McCarren Pool has had a long and at times uncertain history, we assure residents that a new pool is forthcoming," said Phil Abramson, a Parks Department spokesman.

"Thanks to the mayor, funds are finally in our budget, and there is also a greater amount of community consensus than ever before," he added.

The design calls for reopening both the entire mammoth pool, which can hold up to 6,800 people, and the deeper diving pool. The two bathing houses would be turned into a year-round recreation center that would include locker rooms, fitness facilities, restrooms, showers and a gymnasium.

There would also be a skating rink in winter. If all sounds great, but given the history, the latest Parks Department promises were met with some skepticism.

"It's been so frustrating," said Tom Gilbert, who was involved in the 2001 effort. "Some of the neighborhood's residents are also upset that the plan will, after this summer, displace what has become a popular concert series at the pool. Starting in 2006, the pool has hosted bands like Beastie Boys and Devo Biscuits, and a number of film screenings."

The pool complex, completed in 1936, sits on Lorimer Street, between Driggs and Bedford avenues.

PARK SLOPE

Judge Phillips, Hynes foe, 83

By Dana Rubinstein
The Brooklyn Paper

John Phillips, the former Civil Court judge whose multi-million-dollar estate was looted by his court-appointed guardians, died last Saturday at his senior-housing facility on Prospect Park West. He was 83.

"It happened after breakfast, in the elevator on his way to his room" at the Prospect Park Residence, a senior housing facility, said his distraught friend, John O'Hara. Phillips was pronounced dead at New York Methodist Hospital in Park Slope.

Phillips's death is the latest chapter in the long saga of how his estate was plundered by court-appointed guardians after he was declared mentally incompetent in 2001 at the request of District Attorney Charles Hynes, whose job Phillips intended to seek.

Indeed, in his heyday, Phillips was not only politically ambitious, but also a well-known figure in Bedford-Stuyvesant, where he served on the civil court and earned the nickname "the kung-fu" judge because of his black belt in the martial arts.

Phillips was not afraid to court controversy. Not only did he oppose the Brooklyn Democratic machine, but went so far as to back



About 30 mourners attended the funeral of Judge John Phillips at the Open Door Church of God in Christ on Tuesday.

Rudy Giuliani in his 1989 mayoral contest against David Dinkins. "I'm 6-feet-1," explained Phillips, according to the New York Times. "I can kill you with my hands faster than you can believe, and I carry a gun. But I'm scared to walk the streets at night. How do you think black women feel?"

In addition to being outspoken, Phillips was prosperous, having owned more than 10 buildings in Bed-Stuy, including the Slave Theater on Fulton Street, a focal point for neighborhood activists such as the Rev. Al Sharpton. He was worth an estimated \$10 million.

But after Hynes's office had him declared incompetent in 2001, nearly all of the dozen properties Phillips owned were auctioned off — yet the profits ended up enriching only his guardians, not the judge.

Just before his death, events had finally started to turn back in his favor. In December, a state judicial panel suspended the legal license of Emami Taylor, who served as Phillips's guardian between 2003 and 2006, for stealing \$328,000 from Phillips's account.

A movie about his plight was in the works. And the day before his death, Phillips was delivered a new set of furniture bought for him by fashion magnate Mark Ecko, who'd taken an interest in Phillips's plight after reading about it in this and other publications.

But hours later, he was dead.

Now, the surrogate court must determine what to do with his estate.

Thanks to his guardians' incompetence, Phillips owed more than \$1 million in back taxes. His current guardian, James Cahill, is considering auctioning off the Slave Theater to pay the back taxes — Bedford-Stuyvesant neighbors protested the potential auction on Saturday in front of the theater.

Meanwhile, investigations into Taylor's guardianship will proceed, according to a source familiar with the case.

Phillips had no survivors.

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COBBLE HILL



David Walentas angered locals who think they caught him building "cabanas" atop his Atlantic Avenue project.

Is Walentas a 'cabana' boy?

The Brooklyn Paper

Are they city-approved bulkheads or illegal cabanas?

That's what residents of Cobble Hill were wondering this week after David Walentas's controversial — and city-mandated 50-foot-tall — project on Atlantic Avenue suddenly sprouted three bright yellow boxes above the roofline.

Watchdogs feared that the structures are illegal cabanas similar to the beachy doodads atop other Walentas luxury buildings.

Walentas — who tried, but failed, to get an exemption on the Cobble Hill Historic District's 50-foot height cap this fall — replied that the structures are merely mechanical bulkheads, and they've been approved by the Department of Buildings and the Landmarks Preservation Commission.

The landmarks agency confirmed that its 2006 approval allows Walentas to build bulkheads atop the 50-foot building, which is next door to the future Trader Joe's at the corner of Court Street. But the agency also said it would investigate whether the developer was illegally building his beloved cabanas.

— Mike McLaughlin

DUMBO

Hip-hop hooray

Popular DUMBO rap festival returns after apparent snub

By Dana Rubinstein
The Brooklyn Paper

The Brooklyn Hip Hop Festival — which appeared in jeopardy after a scheduling snafu and charges of racism last year — will take place in Brooklyn Bridge Park on July 12, according to the festival's organizer.

Last year, the Empire State Development Corporation, which schedules events in the greenspace and condo development, raised hackles by scheduling a Polish-language production of "Macbeth" in the June slot that had been occupied for two years by a popular festival with headlines like Ghostface Killah.

"There was the impression that the state [wasn't] committed to our type of programming and audience," said Wes Jackson, the organizer of the event. But Jackson said the ensuing backlash — and coverage in The Brooklyn Paper — resulted in meetings that ultimately allowed everyone to sort it out.

The Brooklyn Bridge Park Conservancy reiterated how much it valued the event, and so did the state," said Jackson, who now expects 4,000 concertgoers in Empire Fulton Ferry State Park.

Following the Brooklyn Festival, Jackson plans to take the tour national, stopping in cities like Chicago and Miami.

That's not bad for a festival that began in the Brooklyn Brewery parking lot. "We essentially doubled in size every year," said Jackson, a Clinton Hill resident.

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8th of the Year

Ridge rob spree in just 1 hour

The Brooklyn Paper

68th Precinct

Two 72nd Street homes were robbed on Feb. 13 one hour and

10 blocks apart from each other. The first burglary, between 11th and 12th avenues, occurred at 10:15 am when a burglar broke through the basement door to gain entry into the

house. Police say the crook made off with \$15,300 in cash and jewelry. An hour later, at 9:15 am, a house between Narrows Avenue and Colonial Road was burglar-

ized after a perp entered through the kitchen window. In this case, the thief stole a laptop, cash, and expensive cocaine, cops said.

Walking bandits

Two thugs beat up and robbed a man on Third Avenue on Feb. 11 after nonchalantly approaching him. The man was near the corner of 80th Street at around 2 pm when the thugs pounced. After punching the 35-year-old man in the face, the crooks stole his wallet, keys and cell-phone, cops said.

Sum dum luck

A 13th Avenue Chinese restaurant was robbed on Feb. 11 after a determined burglar broke through the front gate and then smashed through the front glass door. Police say the break-in occurred sometime around 3 am at the restaurant, which is between 69th and 70th streets. The thief left with \$2,200.

— Joe Jordan

62nd Precinct

Social drink

A group of catty, drunken women beat up and robbed another woman at a 62nd Street watering hole on Feb. 16. The 35-year-old victim was inside the bar, which is near 15th Avenue, at around 4:30 pm when she had an argument with one of the five women. Minutes later, the women's posse strolled over and started to beat and punch the victim. One of the perps swiped the purse while another hit the victim with a glass bottle, police said.

Break-in

A thief stole \$20,000 from a West 10th Street apartment on Feb. 13. The 48-year-old tenant returned to the apartment, which is near Avenue S, at around 8 am to find that a rear window had been broken open and \$20,000 in cash and jewelry

had been taken stolen, police said.

Cleaned out

A woman was literally taken to the cleaners after leaving her wallet unattended in a Bay Parkway Laundromat on Feb. 12.

The 28-year-old victim was doing her laundry at the cleaners, which is near 86th Street, at around 5:40 pm. She stepped away from her cart to fold her clothes, and when she returned, her wallet, which contained \$125 and credit and debit cards, was gone, police said.

The victim was unable to get a good look at the perp as he fled the Laundromat.

Savings stolen

A man had his 77th Street apartment broken into overnight on Feb. 11.

The 28-year-old returned to his home, which is near 19th Avenue, at around 9 am the following morning. The thieves managed to swipe \$20,000, along with his safety-deposit box keys, without any signs of forced entry, police said.

Safely stored?

A man had tools and equipment stolen from a Shore Parkway storage facility.

The man returned to the storage unit, which is near Crowspey Avenue, at around 2 pm on Feb. 11 and found that thieves had cut the front padlock and taken wire and a pipe bender valued at \$1,535, police said.

Held up

A gun-toting thug robbed a man on West Seventh Street on Feb. 5.

The 47-year-old was near Avenue T at around 12:30 am when the thief came from behind and pointed the gun in the back of his head.

The thug demanded the victim to get on the ground and to fork over his cash.

The victim handed over \$1,500 and laid face down on the pavement as the thief ran off with the cash, police said.

— Michael Giardina

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Fire in the hole?

Navy will check if there is any ammo in them thar bay

By Dana Rubinstein

The Brooklyn Paper

The Department of Defense will investigate whether live ammunition is still sitting in Gravesend Bay more than 50 years after it was accidentally dumped there — a key win for opponents of a city plan to put a garbage transfer station near the possibly explosive site.

The federal agreement to scour Navy archives comes just a month after Assemblyman William Colton (D-Brooklyn) dropped up the story of a barge that capsize in the bay in 1954, reportedly sending more than 200 tons of live ammunition to the bottom.

News accounts from the era reported that most of the live ammunition was cleaned up, but Colton and Rep. Vito Fossella (R-Bay Ridge) asked the Department of Defense to make absolutely sure before the city begins dredging the bay to make way for the large, trash-hauling barges that will dock at the station, to be located on Shore Parkway at 26th Avenue.

The feds complied. "My office has already assembled a team including our Naval historian, explosive ordnance experts, and the Army Corps of Engineers dredging experts, who are actively collecting this data," the Navy's Assistant Secretary BJ Penn wrote to the lawmakers this week.

The waste-transfer station is a central element in Mayor Bloomberg's garbage plan, which the Council approved last year. A spokeswoman for the Department of Sanitation said that even though the transfer station would be located two miles from the site of the overturned vessel, the city would take the results of the investigation into account.

Meanwhile, a noted environmental lawyer has joined Colton's crusade to stop the garbage-transfer station.

Attorney Joel Kupferman and Colton have called on the federal government to declare Gravesend Bay a "Superfund Site," citing over 30 years of illegal incineration at the defunct Southwest Brooklyn incinerator.

"Any success on that front would result in a mandatory clean-up of the site, which would further delay the construction of the waste transfer station — possibly long enough to force the city to find a new site."

"Nothing short of an enormous environmental assessment and remediation program can help undo the damage that an illegal incinerator has done to Gravesend Bay for over 30 years," said Colton.



Bill Colton

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84th Precinct

A man who saw a wad of cash snatched out of his hand on Feb. 12 followed the thief onto a subway, into Manhattan, and eventually brought the perp to justice with the help of a security guard.

The 46-year-old victim was walking towards the Borough Hall subway station and had reached the corner of Livingston and Court streets at around 12:30 pm when a woman wordlessly grabbed the \$30 he had been holding and took off down the street.

The man ran after her, pursuing her into the station and onto a crowded, Manhattan-bound 3 train. He didn't lose sight of her as she got off at the Wall Street stop and went into a building on Exchange Place near William Street. That's when the inter-borough chase ended, as the man informed a building security guard what had happened and the cops were called.

Officers arrived and arrested the woman.

Heights burgs

A string of burglaries hit Brooklyn Heights — at least four apartments within spitting distance of each other were broken into, two of them on the same floor of the same building. The first strike came on Feb. 11, after a Willow Street resident left her apartment apartment, between Orange and Cranberry streets. When she returned at 9:30 am the next day, she discovered that her laptop, Coach bag, and a fancy watch and other jewelry had been swiped. The perp, who sneaked in through a window opening onto

a fire escape, got away with \$3,145 total, cops said. A downstairs neighbor reported hearing banging noises around 10 pm, but hadn't bothered to investigate further.

Cops believe that the same thief burglarized the same floor the very next day.

A 27-year-old tenant told cops that she left the building around 7 am, and when she got back at 5 pm, she noticed that the bedroom window, which looks out onto the fire escape, had been opened. Upon further examination, she realized that

the thief had taken her laptop, a pair of earrings and an iPod — a total loss of \$2,200.

Down the block, another upper-story apartment was burglarized on Feb. 11.

The resident left in the morning and returned in the evening to find that the window nearest the fire escape had been opened, although in this case the crook had taken only two digital cameras, worth \$410. Perhaps he was fatigued.

Around the corner, in a building on Orange Street between Willow and Hicks streets, a

renter returned from a week on Feb. 11 to discover that another "fire escape burglar" had raided her home for a laptop, a pearl necklace and other valuables. In all, she lost \$5,295 in stuff.

Jeans jacked

An unsavvy shopper made a clean getaway with 20 pairs of jeans from a Smith Street store on Feb. 15.

The clothing store, near the corner of Bergen Street, was quiet around 5 pm when a store employee heard the security alarm go off. Unfortunately, the perp was long gone.

A subsequent perusal of the selling floor revealed that a stack of designer jeans — worth \$2,900 — had been stolen.

Masked mugs

A quartet of masked bandits accosted and robbed a man walking to a subway station on the night of Feb. 15.

The 27-year-old victim was walking on Fulton Street near Adams Street, on his way to the Borough Hall station at around 10 pm, when the four masked men approached him.

Three of them grabbed him and held him against a wall while the fourth thief went through his pockets, taking \$200 and numerous credit cards, which the man immediately cancelled.

— Harry Chandle

88th Precinct

Withdrawal

A pair of perps not only took a man's phone on Feb. 16, but they threatened him into taking \$100 out of his ATM before they let him go.

The 23-year-old's troubles started as he was walking down

Westerly Avenue between Myrtle and Willetsburg avenues at around 6 pm, cellphone to his ear. Two men wearing black jackets approached him, one of them pulling out a knife and demanding, "Get off the f—ing phone and give it to me now."

Not wanting to question five inches of steel, the man complied, and complied again when the thief said, "Now give me your wallet." Then he added, "The only way you're going to get it back is to go to the ATM and give us some money."

The victim proceeded to a nearby Myrtle Avenue bodega with the thugs in tow, withdrew five 20s and got his wallet back.

Clumsy crook

An ungraceful burglar botched an attempt to drill his way into an apartment building on Feb. 10, and had to abandon his project midway through.

The perp was apparently trying to drill holes in the front lock of a building on South Elliot Place near Lafayette Avenue around 9 pm when he accidentally hit the door buzzer.

A still-awake resident got suspicious and came downstairs, but the small time crook realized he had made a rather bad mistake and ran off before he could be identified.

Whack whack

A criminal took a page from Batman's nemesis the Penguin on Feb. 13, when he used an umbrella as a weapon against two teenagers who didn't have any money for him to steal.

The two victims, a pair of 17- and 18-year-old boys, were walking on Fort Greene Place near DeKalb Avenue when a 5-foot-9 man with freckles came

See **POLICE** on page 18

Robber chased into Manhattan

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Activities: swimming, weekly trip for 4- and 5-year-olds, fully equipped nursery classrooms.

Elementary Division

Director: Bobbie Finkelstein
June 30 to Aug 15
Ages: entering K–4th grades
Full day (9 am – 5 pm)
Extended hours (8 am – 6 pm)
Activities: swimming (instructional and recreational), arts and crafts, music, nature, sports, gymnastics, circus arts, trips 2 days per week.

Movin' On Travel Camp

Director: Bobbie Finkelstein
June 30 through Aug 15
Ages: entering 5th – 9th grades
Full day (9 am – 5 pm)
Extended hours (8 am – 6 pm)
Activities: Daily trips, swimming, two 3-day overnights, pre-CTT program for kids entering 9th grade.

Camp Onas

Quaker Sleepover

Camp in Bucks County, PA
(610) 847-5858
camponas.org
friends@camponas.org

Director: Sue Neiger Gould

Activities: swimming, backpacking and camping, canoeing, high ropes challenge course, theme weekends, sports, arts and crafts, feed the animals, copper enameling, water polo, lacrosse, fishing.

Huggs Day School Summer Program

763 President St., Park Slope
(718) 230-5255
Directors: Randle Bader and Gary Siegel
Ages: 2.5 – 5 years
June 20 – Aug. 1
Full day (9 am – 4 pm)
Half day (9 am – noon or 1 pm – 4 pm)

Kim's Kid's Summer Camp

PS 321, 7th Ave., Park Slope
(718) 768-6419
Director: Dan Moinester
Ages: 4-1/2 – 11
June 30 – Aug. 8
Full day 9 am – 4 pm
Extended hours 8 am – 6 pm
Flex weeks and number of days per week available.

Activities: Traveling day camp

with lots of physical and outdoor activity. Daily trips, including swimming (lake, pool and beach), hikes, museums, zoos, playgrounds, NY Aquarium, Liberty Science Center, bowling, climbing, exploring, Sesame Place. Carefully selected adult staff.

Park Explorers

OPEN HOUSE March 15
611 Eighth Avenue, Park Slope
(718) 788-3620
Director: Chris Altman
parkexplorers@yahoo.com
parkexplorers.com
Ages: 4 to 14
June 27 to August 29
Full day 8:30 am–3:30 pm

Extended hours til 6:30 pm

Early drop off 8:00 am
Bus transportation in many brownstone Brooklyn areas
Activities: No two days alike! Sports of all kinds, nature walks, hiking, arts and crafts, gymnastics, tennis, drama, karate, singing, trips each week in and around NYC. Special programs in sports and theater for third grade and up.

Park Slope Day Camp

OPEN HOUSE Sunday March
Continued on page 7

Beth Elohim Day Camps



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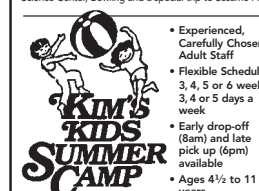
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The Brooklyn Paper 2008 CAMP GUIDE

Continued from page 6
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camp@parkslopedaycamp.com
Director: Ronny Schindler
Ages: entering P-K-9th grades
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Full day (8 am - 4 pm), early
dismissal optional for young
kids. Extended hours to 6:30 pm
Transportation: free morning
shuttle from most Brownstone
Brooklyn and Bay Ridge
Activities: outdoor camp with
sports, trips, gymnastics, drama,
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grades 9 and 10.
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(718) 836-0800, ext. 3230
www.polyprep.org
Director: Michael Jursch
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Arts Camp, Summer Academic
Program, Sports Camps,
Computer Camp, swimming
lessons (ages 2-16)

**Plymouth Day
Camp**
75 Hick St., Bklyn Heights
(718) 624-1743, ext. 3030
plymouthdaycamp.org
Director: Dana Rosenbloom
Ages: 5 to 5 years
June 23 to August 1
Full day 9 am to 3:30 pm
12:30 to 3:15 to 5 - 9 to 3
Activities: Arts and crafts,
swimming, sports skills, field
trips, music, gymnastics, karate

**Brooklyn Arts
Exchange**
OPEN HOUSE: Sat March 8,
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(718) 832-0018
www.brooklynartsexchange.org
Director: Peter McCorty
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Ages: entering K to 5th grade
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Extended day 8:30 to 5 pm
Activities: Offering seven
one-week sessions in video,
theater, circus arts, musical the-
ater, puppetry, and dance and
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Young Artists Program
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Summer Camp
or call 718-625-5252
camp@openhouseatnurseryschool.com
318A Warren Street (at Smith)

BROOKLYN BUILDS

The arts space near BAM

By Dana Rubinstein
The Brooklyn Paper

Music lovers will get to hear the likes of Lou Reed, Ben Folds Five and Dan Zanes — and not spend much money to do it — at a new concert hall being opened near much-pricier venues near the Brooklyn Academy of Music.

The group that 30 years ago founded the popular "Celebrate Brooklyn" summer concert series in Prospect Park is planning a 250-seat performance space for year-round "Celebrate Brooklyn-like" performances that won't cost much more than a movie ticket.

"In a neighborhood where King Lear tickets can be scalped for hundreds, we're going to be providing an affordable, quality performing arts experience," said Leslie Schultz, the executive director of Brooklyn Information and Culture (BRIC), which is housed in the century-old Strand Theater, the Fort Greene building on Fulton Street and Rockwell Place that was originally built for vaudeville shows, but which now houses BRIC's TV studios, and Urban Glass, a glass-blowing collective.

Given BRIC's track record, patrons should get a lot for their money. Celebrate Brooklyn's free Prospect Park summer series — regularly draws significant musicians, like Joan Osborne, the Hold Steady, the Neville Brothers, Sierra Leone's Refugee All Stars, The Hold Steady and Mami Chao.

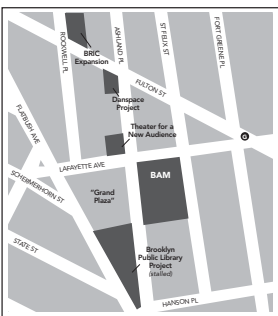
Then again, if he just builds market-rate units, the private credit crunch and looming recession cast doubt on whether he'll get enough financing, and whether enough buyers will be able to afford the finished product.

Such questions are increasingly bedeviling developers, according to Joe Chan, the president of the Downtown Brooklyn Partnership, the quasi-governmental group that oversees the redevelopment of the area bounded by Tillary, Fulton and Jay Streets and Flatbush Avenue Extension.

"Do developers developing condos [consider] a rental scenario?" asked Chan. "Do they [consider] a condo project with a hotel component? Absolutely. I think you see a more thorough analysis of their options."

Chan said such rejiggering is coming in the wake of the mortgage meltdown. "We are definitely seeing developers having more difficulty getting financing now than they did three months ago," said Chan.

Ray Quaranta, of Jones Lang LaSalle, an international firm that manages projects for developers, said that it's not just banks that are growing more cautious. Some builders are getting cold feet, too.



The performance space, which is slated to open in 2010, is part of a \$17.3-million renovation of the Strand Theater building, which sits adjacent to the Brooklyn Academy of Music's Harvey Theater, now hosting "Macbeth" (with tickets starting at \$30) and just down the block from the Fort, a luxury high-rise condominium.

The mayor, City Council and borough president are footing the cost of the renovation of the building, perhaps the least heralded of the projects that comprise the current phase of

the so-called "BAM Cultural District," the city's vision for a borough-based counterpart to Lincoln Center.

"It's an incredibly important project, because it is taking an established, Brooklyn-based group that does great things and helps them increase their programmatic capacity," said Joe Chan, the head of the Downtown Brooklyn Partnership, which is also overseeing the Cultural District.

The Strand renovation will more than double the size of BRIC's headquarters, which the Brooklyn Community Access



A planned expansion of a defunct Rockwell Place theater into a new performance space and expanded studios for Brooklyn Cable Access Television (above) is just part of the latest developments in the slow-growing BAM Cultural District (map).

Television is produced, and will add a fourth TV studio and a ground-floor art exhibition space. It will also give Urban Glass more space on the first floor.

The city is expected to announce an architect for the project in March, and construction should begin in 2009.

The other three projects in the pipeline for the BAM Cultural District include:

- The Frank Gehry- and Hugh Hardy-designed home for the Manhattan-based Theater for a New Audience at Lafayette Avenue and Ashland Place. Construction should begin in the first half of 2008.
- A "Grand Plaza" bounded by

Flatbush, Lafayette and Ashland avenues. Construction should begin in late 2008, early 2009.

- A mixed-use residential building and headquarters for the Manhattan-based modern dance troupe, Dancespace, at Fulton Street and Ashland Place. Construction should begin in early 2009.

A glass-walled, Erique Norton-designed performing arts library for the Brooklyn Public Library, which would be directly south of the "Grand Plaza," appears to be on hold for now. It is no longer on maps of the BAM Cultural District that are put out by the Downtown Brooklyn Partnership.

Big D'Town project shuts down

By Dana Rubinstein
The Brooklyn Paper

Last month's abrupt shutdown of a major development project near Metrotech is a setback for planners' lofty vision of a new, 24-7 business and residential mini-city in Downtown Brooklyn, said experts this week.

John Catsimatidis, the owner of the Grinstein supermarket chain, who tore down a Laundromat, pharmacy and grocery store along two Myrtle Avenue blocks in preparation for a 640-unit, mixed-income residential development, has halted the project — temporarily, he says — blaming both the credit crisis and the lack of affordable housing bonds.

"Right now we're in an evaluation stage, which should last a few weeks," Catsimatidis told The Brooklyn Paper.

On the one hand, Catsimatidis could abandon the project's 215-unit affordable housing component altogether and just build market-rate units, but he'd also be passing up some tax incentives.

"It's not required by law, but we get certain bonus opportunities if we do [the affordable housing]," he said.

Then again, if he just builds market-rate units, the private credit crunch and looming recession cast doubt on whether he'll get enough financing, and whether enough buyers will be able to afford the finished product.

Such questions are increasingly bedeviling developers, according to Joe Chan, the president of the Downtown Brooklyn Partnership, the quasi-governmental group that oversees the redevelopment of the area bounded by Tillary, Fulton and Jay Streets and Flatbush Avenue Extension.

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Chan said such rejiggering is coming in the wake of the mortgage meltdown. "We are definitely seeing developers having more difficulty getting financing now than they did three months ago," said Chan.

Ray Quaranta, of Jones Lang LaSalle, an international firm that manages projects for developers, said that it's not just banks that are growing more cautious. Some builders are getting cold feet, too.

"People who were going to move forward very quickly on a deal, are beginning to say, 'You know what, I'm going to wait and see what happens,'" Chan said.

Chan's forecast is less optimistic than the vision of a glitzy, 24-7 residential and business community that he presented in November, in an animated presentation narrated by legendary actor Ian McKellen.

The presentation depicted \$9.2 billion in new private investment by 2012, including 14,301 residential units, 1,803 hotel rooms and 1.6 million square feet of new retail space.

That vision was a reconfiguration of the original Downtown Brooklyn Plan, which saw the area as a booming business district, rather than a bedroom community.

Whatever he decides to do, Catsimatidis, who revealed the delay to New York Magazine, sought to downplay any concerns that he's going to leave a block of abandoned lots between Prince Street and Ashland Place in Fort Greene, where once there were neighborhood amenities.



A row of local businesses on Myrtle Avenue were torn down last year to make room for a large skyscraper and retail strip. But now that project has been halted due to financial troubles, angering residents.

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But now that project has been halted due to financial troubles, angering residents.

RAINER...

Continued from page 1

But insiders say the scale of Atlantic Yards is exactly the problem in a down market.

"Forest City Ratner sold its Atlantic Yards project to elected officials on its promise of 'affordable' housing," said Daniel Goldstein, spokesman for the anti-Yards group, Develop Don't Destroy Brooklyn. "Yet they haven't even applied for the bonds to make it happen, and there is no sign that there will be room for them under the annual bond allocation."

"Forest City Ratner needs to come clean to the public and elected officials as to whether or not they are actually going to be able to finance their promises, and if so, when," he added.

In addition to Ratner's megadevelopment, the Downtown Brooklyn Partnership has predicted another 750 units of affordable housing in Downtown Brooklyn — including 215 apartments in John Catsimatidis's just-halted 660-unit development on Myrtle Avenue between Prince Street and Ashland Place.

— essentially, very low-cost government loans — to build low-income housing. Indeed, "Forest City Ratner sold its Atlantic Yards project to elected officials on its promise of 'affordable' housing," said Daniel Goldstein, spokesman for the anti-Yards group, Develop Don't Destroy Brooklyn. "Yet they haven't even applied for the bonds to make it happen, and there is no sign that there will be room for them under the annual bond allocation."

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Developers typically rely on federal affordable housing bonds

were also included in last year's Fort Greene and Clinton Hill rezoning, and are expected to be a part of the upcoming Carroll Gardens and DUMBO rezonings.

"That's kind of pushed demand for bonds," said Slattery.

Every year, Congress mandates how many of these low-cost bonds can be issued to states, which, in turn, distribute

them to localities.

Demand is only growing. A 1970s-era housing subsidy program called 421A, which gives a cherished tax break to developers of new housing, was amended last year so that developers in hot neighborhoods like Williamsburg and DUMBO only get its 15-year tax break if they include affordable housing. Of

course, they'll need those affordable housing bonds to do it.

And that new demand, coupled with the bleak economic outlook, means that a lot of housing — affordable and market rate — simply won't get built.

"Unless the government provides the subsidies, it's likely that developers will stop building," said Fisher.

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OUR OPINION

Ratner's shell game

It is becoming increasingly clear that developer Bruce Ratner will not be able to build much of the below-market-rate housing that he's promised to include in Atlantic Yards.

As we report on our front page this week, Ratner's vow to include 2,250 units of so-called "affordable" housing in his \$4-billion mega-project is contingent upon \$1.4 billion in taxpayer subsidies — but, there are only \$1.3 billion in such federal funds available in the entire state of New York this year.

And experts, including the pro-development president of the Downtown Brooklyn Partnership, Joe Chan, are already sounding the alarm that something's got to give.

If history is a guide, taxpayers will be getting the giving — but now they won't be getting affordable housing in return.

The affordable housing units at Atlantic Yards remain the project's principal carrot in the face of widespread community opposition and egregious misuse of public subsidies to a multi-billion-dollar company.

But there's a problem with Ratner's promised units: If he can't get the tax subsidies from the state, he can walk away from the deal simply by cutting a check for \$500,000 — which represents a tiny .014 percent of the company's \$3.6-billion total value — to one of the signatories of his "Community Benefits Agreement."

Then again, he could also call his enablers in state government and complain of the shortfall in subsidies. Perhaps they will do what they've always done — repeatedly at Metrotech and at Atlantic Terminal Mall — and lavish more taxpayer money on another of Ratner's white elephants.

The shortfall in affordable housing subsidies is no surprise to critics of the project. At the time the city and state were steamrolling Atlantic Yards past reasonable opposition, housing industry analysts were already saying that there simply would not be enough federal subsidies to underwrite the promises that Ratner was making.

But the fox — in this case, an Empire State Development Corporation filled with Ratner cronies — was guarding that chickens coop.

Now, those chickens have come home to roost. An easily foreseen downturn in the financial markets has had the predicted result of raising demand for these federal subsidies as the supply remains flat.

It's affecting projects as far away as Buffalo and as near as Flatbush Avenue. It will affect Atlantic Yards, too.

ALL DRAWN OUT



LETTERS

Jed Walentas answers his critics

To the editor,

In a recent letter in this newspaper, ("Trim Two Trees plan," Feb. 2), the chairman of the Urban Design Committee for the Brooklyn Chapter of the American Institute of Architects called our revised Dock Street proposal a "well thought out solution." While we are grateful that the AIA thinks highly of elements of our project — including aspects of its contextual design, affordable housing, a new public middle school, a "green" building, parking and neighborhood-oriented retail — we want The Brooklyn Paper's readers to understand our approach to the design issues raised in that letter.

The Brooklyn AIA recommended that the site be given a zoning identical to the adjacent property. It is important to recognize that such zoning would not affect the size of the building we could build. It would, however, prevent us from moving the bulk of the

building's tower away from the Brooklyn Bridge. After hearing the concerns of the community, we have completely revised a previous version of the plan and reoriented the building to increase its physical distance from the bridge and minimize view obstructions. While it is true that the new plan results in slightly more overall height, the portion of the building closest to the bridge is much lower and the taller portion is turned so that far less of the bridge view is obstructed.

The Brooklyn AIA also recommended that the building include setbacks at the south end of the tower closest to bridge. Such setbacks would not have a significant positive impact on the view from the bridge and would result in a non-contextual design for the surrounding neighborhood.

The Dock Street building design is driven in large part by the need to be respectful of, and responsive to, the very strong architectural character of DUMBO as embodied by the Gar Buildings — all of which rise to their full height without setback. Dock Street is a modern interpretation of these historic buildings, and as such, we feel that the setbacks that are required per zoning are inappropriate here.

We firmly believe that our design philosophy, in conjunction with the panoply of community benefits the new Dock Street project offers, makes the new Dock Street proposal significantly stronger than before.

Jed Walentas, DUMBO
The writer is a principal at Two Trees Management

She's not Lyons

To the editor,

As an avid reader of The Brooklyn Paper, I would like to offer my congratulations on your well-deserved "Editor of the Year" award ("Editor of the Year" Jan. 12) as well as my sympathies about Gersh Kuntzman's broken ankle/search for a better orthopedist ("My ankle is having an affair," Feb. 2).

I have a similar story about Dr. Tom Lyons that occurred four years ago. My elderly aunt broke her ankle and was scheduled for surgery at Lutheran Medical Center by a one of the prominent doctors in Bay Ridge.

About one hour before the scheduled surgery, my sister and I were informed by a nurse, not by the surgeon, mind you, that he would not be available to do the surgery. After I strongly insisted on speaking with the "replacement" surgeon, a very unassuming young man approached us and identified himself as Dr. Tom Lyons.

We spoke for a few minutes, trying to find out a little about his background. He then finally and very humbly informed us that he was the chief of the Orthopedic Trauma Unit at Lutheran Medical Center, explained the procedure he was about to perform, and reassured us that he didn't expect a problem.

Needless to say, we felt relieved and appreciated the fact that not only was the chief of the trauma unit operating on our aunt, but that he took the time to explain the proce-

dures in simple terms and with respect. The operation was a success and my aunt was on her feet again.

I have since recommended Dr. Lyons to many people. And one more thing: I wish Gersh a speedy recovery so that he can make the trip to Ponte Vedra Beach to pick up his award on Feb. 21.

Louise Sahadi, Bay Ridge
Editor's note: Kuntzman did, indeed, make the trip to Ponte Vedra Beach. You can see his acceptance speech at brooklynpaper.com.

Taking its 'Toll'

I know you'll be providing full coverage of the Toll Brothers just-unveiled plan for 626 units along the Gowanus Canal between Carroll and Second streets, but in the meantime, I want you to know that many, many nearby blocks will be affected by such density.

There will be hundreds more units in the Gowanus area. Is anyone planning for where these people will shop/eat/send their kids to school/ride the train/park their car/sit even walk?

Please wake me from this nightmare! How can our tiny neighborhood sustain this kind of insane development?

Triada Samaras, Gowanus
The writer is co-founder of Carroll Gardens Coalition to Respectfully Develop.

Editor's note: A story on the Toll Brothers plan appears this week on page 3.

DELEGATES...

Continued from page 1

Greene) and Karim Camara (D-Crown Heights) sent a letter this week to Democratic National

Committee Chairman Howard Dean demanding that superdelegates "not overturn the will of the majority."

"If one candidate concludes the primary season with more pledged delegates and a greater percentage of the popular vote, then fairness dictates that superdelegates — many of whom are unelected party insiders — should not overturn the will of the majority of voters," the letter said. "To do otherwise would undermine the most fundamental tenants of democracy."

Voters also wondered how Clarke and Towns could have the temerity to go against such decisive outcomes in their districts.

"They should be representing their people," said Cait Flynn of Clinton Hill. "It should be that clear-cut, but they're acting as politicians."

Ferrezz-Lafanque of Prospect Heights added: "It's disingenuous to claim to be a representative, and then go and vote against the constituents."

Political insiders said the pro-Obama vote in the two districts has forced Clarke and Towns to do a tightrope act, balancing pressure from the party with crisis in America.

<http://brooklynpaper.com> Details on Primary recount

"They're doing a very rational self-interest calculation," said Patrick Egan, a politics professor at New York University. "They're asking themselves, 'Who's going to win?' and 'Which way is the wind blowing?'"

The political gut check is not limited to Brooklyn. Last week, Rep. John Lewis (D-Georgia), a strong Clinton supporter, flipped to the Obama side after his district voted for the junior senator from Illinois. And Donna Brazile, a longtime Clinton supporter who is now with the Democratic National Committee, recently told CNN that she would quit the Democratic Party if the nomination was decided by superdelegates, not the voters.

"It would be a letdown that despite the involvement and the passion, their vote didn't matter," said the Rev. Clinton Miller of the Brown Memorial Baptist Church. "If these types of things keep on happening it really puts democracy in crisis in America."

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The Brooklyn Paper's essential guide to the Borough of Kings

February 23/March 1, 2008

Punk talk

Henry Rollins brings rage to the stage at Greenpoint's Warsaw

By Adam Rathe
The Brooklyn Paper

Tall, burly and covered in tattoos, Henry Rollins is the type of guy most people would want to tick off. But on Feb. 27 and 28, fans of the author, actor and former frontman for seminal punk band Black Flag will pack Greenpoint's Warsaw to watch him get hot under the collar in his new, live show, "Provoked: An Evening of Quintessentially American Opinionated Editorializing and Storytelling."

Part of a 20-city tour, "Provoked" is in the same vein as "The Henry Rollins Show," the Independent Film Channel series featuring Rollins and a variety of guests (recently — Iggy Pop and Don Chedde) sounding off on topics of the day. For Rollins, however, the nearly three-hour long live show is an unparalleled experience.

"I go up there and I talk about where I've been, what I saw and how I feel about it," Rollins told GO Brooklyn. "Most of my references will be from 2007 when I was in Iran, Lebanon, Syria and Jordan. I was in Pakistan when [Benazir] Bhutto was assassinated, and that kept things lively. I just got back from South Africa about 72 hours ago, and I had some amazing experiences there. I spent a few moments sitting in [Nelson] Mandela's cell and that was completely intense. That's basically what it is: me story-telling and recounting. There is a lot of editorializing as we Americans are wont to do."

But Rollins isn't just another armchair pundit. In addition to his endless travel — he plans on taking his 26th trip to Australia later this year and claimed — "I have a favorite restaurant in every city. I know where the gym is, where the good record stores are; I know where the good sushi is all over the

world," although he wasn't sure of a spot in Brooklyn — he's also immersed himself in politics and culture.

"I learn a lot about foreign affairs by going to foreign places and having affairs," Rollins said. "I've read books about Iran, but it's nothing like going. You have to go see things for yourself. So that's what I do, and that's where I get my stuff from: being there and seeing that."

Since 2003, Rollins has traveled to Iraq with the United Service Organization (USO) on a number of occasions to meet with U.S. troops.

"This endless thing in Iraq literally keeps me up at night," he said. "There are so many unanswered questions and the lack of critical thinking of so many

Americans is what makes me mad." Still, Rollins, who has also been an outspoken advocate of gay rights, is a staunch supporter of our military.

"The troops I like," Rollins said. "The troops don't start wars. The soldiers I've met are remarkably apolitical, and the conflict that we remark upon from the safety of our homes is different than the one they fight. For 12 hours, [a soldier's] job is to not get killed and to get his buddies back by sundown."

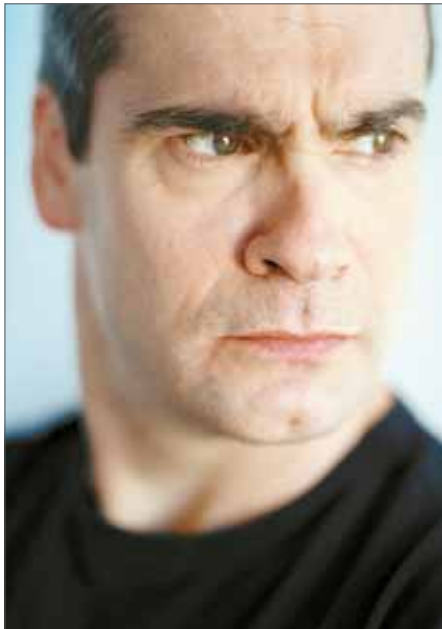
With such strong opinions, it's no surprise that Rollins discourages audience participation at his shows — if anyone shouted out his dissenting ideas, the performance could take even longer.

"There will be quiet while the old man is speaking," said Rollins, 47. "I'm not looking for audience participation, but we'll talk later after the show. I'm on a mad tear, and they need to let me do it."

That's all right with fans. "He comes from an enviable place where he's experienced a lot of stuff that's become

THEATER

Henry Rollins will perform "Provoked: An Evening of Quintessentially American Opinionated Editorializing and Storytelling" on Feb. 27 and 28 at 7 pm at Warsaw (261 Bridge Ave. at Eckford Street in Greenpoint). Tickets are \$28.50. For information, call (718) 387-0525 or visit www.politicalactionhome.com.



Raise a 'Flag': Former Black Flag frontman Henry Rollins performs solo in "Provoked: An Evening of Quintessentially American Opinionated Editorializing and Storytelling" on Feb. 27 and 28 at Warsaw in Greenpoint.

historic," said Matt Molnar, a 28-year-old Bushwick resident with a Black Flag tattoo on his left bicep. "Having played a very large hand in developing the Washington, D.C. punk scene and then being in Black

Flag in L.A., he's had his finger in a lot of pies, and so people are still paying to go see him."

"I think going to see Henry's spoken word might be too much of him. I've always been kind of apprehensive about it. But I'll forgive him the majority of his egotism, because he did sing on Black Flag's 'Damaged.'" Molnar didn't plan to attend either of the Warsaw shows.

Whether a crowd is made up of diehard Black Flag fans or those familiar with Rollins's work as a television host, the man himself thinks this performance is his most essential.

"This is easier than playing with a band," said Rollins. "A song is a song. There aren't many words, and if you blow out a lyric, the snare drum covers you. Now, I've got no meter but myself. If I stop talking, there's no show. That weight is all on me, and I quite enjoy it, but that makes it way more complex than a band gig. The talking show is a front-loaded, mental, intellectual exercise."

"I am very prepared," he added. "I don't want to go on stage and ramble. I'm not pulling a string out of my chest, but I come very loaded."

BOOKS

Joke book

"I don't do comedy," said Richard Zoglin, author of "Comedy at the Edge: How Stand-up in the 1970s Changed America." "I can talk, but I don't know how funny I am."

On Feb. 28, his fans will be the ones to decide as they pack Free-Bird Books to hear Zoglin read from his tome, for which he interviewed comedians from Steve Martin to David Letterman.

"I grew up listening to comedians and watching them on TV," said Zoglin, who works as an editor at Time magazine. "I was a huge fan of the whole generation that started with Richard Pryor and George Carlin. It was the golden age and represented a shift in stand-up comedy — I wanted to chronicle that."

Zoglin said he's nostalgic for a time when stand-ups were changing the comedy business.

"It seemed like such an exciting time for stand-up comedy," said Zoglin. "And looking back, I was surprised that nobody ever did a book pulling it all together as an era."

It looks as though he's had the last laugh.

Richard Zoglin will read from "Comedy at the Edge: How Stand-up in the 1970s Changed America" (Bloomsbury, \$24.95) at 7:30 pm on Feb. 28 at FreeBird Books (123 Columbia St. at Kane Street in the Columbia Street Waterfront District). Free. For information, call (718) 643-8484. — Adam Rathe

ART

Hot shots

Ladies Loto won't be selling scratch-off tickets, but if you're looking to find photography from local artists, stop by the March 1 opening of their "31 Under 31: Young Women in Art Photography" exhibit, and you'll hit the jackpot.

"Ladies Loto is a social networking group, but we like to get involved with the community," said Natalie Blacker, the group's founder. "There's a need for more shows that focus on the talent of women."

So Blacker teamed up with curators Lumi Tan and Jon Feinstein from the Humble Arts Foundation to arrange the show, which will feature artists like Mary Mattingly and Amy Elkins (whose "Kyle, Brooklyn, NY, 2007" is pictured), and will run at Third Ward in Bushwick through March 28. Opening night will also feature complimentary 10 Cane rum drinks, music from DJ 24Court and a dance party.

"31 Under 31: Young Women in Art Photography" opens at 7 pm on March 1 at Third Ward 195 Morgan Ave. at Stagg Street in Bushwick. Free. For information, call (718) 715-4961. — Adam Rathe

BOOKS

Music notes

"People are getting bored of rock shows," Paul Mazur (pictured), author of the new book "What It Is: What It Is: What It Is" (515, Write Bloody Publishing) is available at www.writebloody.com. — Adam Rathe

what I've envisioned." And that's exactly what he got on Wednesday, Feb. 13 at Sound Fix Lounge in Williamsburg for his book party. The book, a collection of Mazur's poetry and prose and images created by Matt Maest (bassist in The Cold War Kids rock band), has been two years in the making, and was inspired by rock 'n' roll tomes like Greil Marcus's "Lipstick Traces." And adding to the variety of the evening, Chase Pagan and Matty Charles performed live music while poet Derrick Brown read from his own work.

"I don't know if it's some type of panic disorder, but something in my chemical makeup causes me to see things in a specific way," said Mazur, a Williamsburg resident. So, the book is, "my perception of the world, my surroundings and my life."

"What It Is: What It Is" (515, Write Bloody Publishing) is available at www.writebloody.com. — Adam Rathe

Rock 'n' Rollins

Henry Rollins has been a bold-faced name for over 20 years. From his years singing for Black Flag and the Rollins Band, to his career as a globetrotting talking head, author and actor, Rollins has made himself a star. Here's a look at how he's done it.

1980 Rollins joins State of Alert, the Washington, D.C. punk outfit that released one album and three songs on the 1982 "Flex

Your Head" compilation, which helped launch the careers of local bands including Minor Threat.

1981 Rollins joins Black Flag and leaves Washington for Los Angeles. The same year, the band releases "Damaged," a seminal West Coast punk record, with Rollins on vocals.

1987 Having left Black Flag and released two solo albums of spoken word,

Rollins forms the Rollins Band and releases the 14-track "Life Time."

1994 After endless recording and touring, Rollins wins a Grammy award for his spoken word; releases "Weight," a record that hit 33 on the Billboard charts and spawns the hit song "Liar," and makes his film debut in the Charlie Sheen movie "The Chase."

2002 Rollins gains a wider audience when he becomes co-host of TLC's "Full Metal Challenge," a

game show where contestants build cars and use them to compete in various challenges.

2006 In April, the Independent Film Channel airs "The Henry Rollins Channel," a series that features him as host to a variety of guests and musical acts. In addition to hosting, Rollins performs spoken word and sounds off with political and social commentary.

2008 Having released "Uncut from NYC," his latest spoken word album, in 2007, Rollins heads back on the road with "Provoked" to share insight from his latest travels and experiences.

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Twisting by the shul: Sarah Kassai (center) instructs Sarah (left) and Esther Sochet at the Center for Kosher Culinary Arts.

Challah back girls

Midwood's new kosher cooking school hosts classes in sushi, vegetable carving and more

By C.W. Thompson
For The Brooklyn Paper

On a recent Tuesday night, a cooking class in a new Midwood culinary school had nine women and one man attempting to braid dough into challah loaves. Each was eager to learn the proper braiding technique as taught by the instructor. Some had flour on their faces and sweaters, but all struggled equally with the folding technique. "Who wants to braid four or five?" asked the teacher, Sarah Kassai. "Or should we do six?"

The workshop was lively, as Kassai's teaching style encouraged discussion. Conversations about baking issues flew across the worktables. "What type of yeast is best? Can I replace the sugar with honey?" And interspersed with these questions were inquiries about the Jewish kosher tradition.

Unusual for a cooking class? Yes. But the course was being held at the Center for Kosher Culinary Arts, a new

DINING

The Center for Kosher Culinary Arts is located at 1407 Cones Island Ave. between avenues J and K in Midwood. For a class schedule and more information, call (718) 692-2442 or visit the Web site at www.happyhomepage.com/kosherculinary.

school dedicated to all things kosher. "What about raisins?" asked Kassai. "Who uses them?" "They don't use raisins in Europe," one attendee replied, "so I don't use them."

Kassai later sliced off an egg-sized chunk of dough and passed it around. "This you can use for the 'half-shat' challah," she said, referring to the act of ritually burning a piece of dough.

Two of Kassai's students, Sarah and Esther Sochet, a mother and daughter who live nearby on Flatbush Avenue, had come for a bonding exercise. "We wanted to find something we

were both interested in," said the mother, Sarah. "We came to see if the instructor has any secrets. The way she does the yeast is new to me."

The Sochet's discovered the classes through the housewares store beneath the school called Happy Home, owned for 15 years by Baruch and Elka Pinson. Over the years, they had held cake-decorating classes in their store, but when the upstairs space became available, the Pinsons rented it and moved the classes there.

"We had the space," said Elka. "In New York, space is everything. We also had the customer base and the infrastructure, and we saw a need for a kosher cooking school."

In early 2007, the Pinsons ramped up the course load, renovated the large one-room space, and found themselves needing help. They brought in Jesse Blonder as the director and a co-owner, and since October, what they describe as New York's first, full-scale kosher cooking school has been in operation.

A finer diner

"It's been crazy," Spero Katehish, owner of the New St. Clair Restaurant, told GO Brooklyn as he worked the register and answered phones on Feb. 25, the first day that the Cobble Hill stalwart was back in business. After a five-month break, the diner opened its doors under the watchful eye of Katehish (who also owns the Carroll Gardens Classic Diner on Smith Street), and on its first day, it was indeed swamped.

Open from 6 am to midnight daily, the restaurant serves over 300 items ranging from omelets and pancakes to burgers (beef, turkey, veggie or buffalo), Greek spinach pie and a five-vegetable stir-fry, covering its bases with big regular and Smith Street gourmands.

The space has been given a modern makeover: The booths and counter are clean and shiny. Upscale touches, like offering Shiraz and Champagne — by the glass or bottle — and a menu of ritually burning a piece of dough.

The New St. Clair Restaurant (292 Atlantic Ave. at Smith Street in Cobble Hill) accepts American Express, Discover, MasterCard and Visa. F train to Bergen Street. Entrees: \$5.45-\$23.95. The restaurant is open daily from 6 am to midnight. For information, call (718) 624-3741.

— Linnea Covington



BREAKING CHEWS

It's one small avenue for man, but one giant leap for the borough's dining scene. Peter Scalfani (Bar Tano, Luce) has opened the doors of his latest venture, **Bar Tano** (457 Third Ave. at Ninth Street in Goanus), a chic, 12-table bolle that is serving food and drink seven days a week, with brunch and late night bar hours on the weekends.

But why leap over Fourth Avenue, which logic would deem the next boulevard to fall to the creeping bistro-and-Bugaboo hordes?

"We're pioneers," Scalfani told GO Brooklyn, over plastic glasses of Merlot and bites of pizza, two nights before the restaurant's Feb. 7 opening. "We're going to anchor this neighborhood."

Keeping in mind that Third Avenue doesn't draw the same foot traffic that the neighborhood's other streets do, Scalfani said he will be keeping everything on his menu — small plates of Italian food, pizzas and paninis — under \$15.

The prosciutto, mozzarella and arugula pizza at Bar Tano.

And as for the future of the block, which right now boasts a tire shop, a deli and an overall dingy air, Scalfani said, "More will come. Something a bit more appealing than what's here."

While Williamsburg is generally a late-to-wake neighborhood (most brunch places don't get crowded un-

til around 1 pm), with the arrival of **El Beit** (158 Bedford Ave. at North Ninth Street in Williamsburg), a new high-end coffee shop, perhaps locals will find themselves awake and properly caffeinated more regularly. Using a Clover, an \$11,000 coffee machine that java snobs go gaga for, the shop is less bohemian than neighborhood stalwarts like **Verb Cafe** (218 Bedford Ave. at North Fifth Street in Williamsburg), echoing the sentiment of Greenpoint's favorite java joint, **Cafe Grumpy** (193 Meserole Ave. at Diamond Street in Greenpoint), that the days of the so-so coffee shop are numbered in North Brooklyn.

Chef Allison Robicelli is thinking big. "I want to make this the ultimate Brooklyn restaurant," she said, talking about **Aura** (8305 Third Ave. at 83rd Street in Bay Ridge), the new tapas bar she opened earlier this month. A Bay Ridge native, Robicelli has done time in tony Manhattan

kitchens and as a high-end caterer, but decided to come back to the old neighborhood to serve what she calls "Brooklyn fusion" cuisine. With Asian, Spanish and American influences, the small plates at Aura — including dishes like green tea-poached pears and Merlot-braised chorizo — are meant to capture the international flavor of the borough.

But onto every plate a little rain must fall. This week we said goodbye to **Biscuit BBQ** and **Cocotte** in Park Slope, and **Sorel** at Prospect Heights. Meanwhile, in Brooklyn Heights, **Armando's** will close on March 16, after 70 years in business. Armando's owner Peter Byros told GO Brooklyn, "I am retiring," and said that a Midwestern chain restaurant would be going into the space, although he declined to name the chain. Neighborhood preservationists, along with state Senate candidate Daniel Squadron, are currently campaigning to save the neon "lobster sign" that hangs over the door.

Got a hot dining tip? Drop us a line at GOBrooklyn@BrooklynPaper.com — Adam Raths and Linnea Covington

Oud to joy

Billyburg falafel purveyor trades hummus for Arabic harmonies

By Jessanne Collins
for The Brooklyn Paper

On an unseasonably warm Wednesday night in February, the door to Najeb's Place was propped open, letting in the fresh air, the sound of Graham Avenue traffic and a dimly lit crowd hungry for falafel sandwiches and rosewater mint lemonade. The shop's proprietor, Najib Shaheen, in a flannel shirt and backwards baseball cap, greeted his customers one by one, often with a hearty handclasp and a dose of his signature good-natured ribbing. He knew many of them by name.

Shaheen has met some of his closest friends — "the cream of the neighborhood" — here in the shop. And they're going to miss him when he leaves: After three years in business, Shaheen will be selling Najeb's in March to concentrate full-time on his real passion, music. After all, Najeb's has never been only about the food.

"This place goes beyond falafel," Shaheen GO Brooklyn.

Customers old and new will have one more chance to experience what he means on Wednesday, March 5, when Shaheen performs in the restaurant as part of the Brooklyn Maqam Arab Music Festival. The month-long series of free concerts and events, sponsored by the Brooklyn Arts Council (BAC), will feature more than 100 musicians and groups performing an array of Middle Eastern musical traditions from folk and classical to contemporary and fusion.

Kay Turner, the director of BAC Folk Arts and organizer of the program, said that after 9-11, a number of venues reduced or cancelled their live Arabic music programming. She sees the festival as a way to boost the Arabic music scene and to introduce new audiences to the varied music traditions of the Middle East.

"Najib has a special place in



Farewell concert: Before selling Najeb's Place, oudman Najib Shaheen will perform "Oud-Off: Oud and Qahwa," with Bassam Saba, on March 5 at his Williamsburg restaurant.

the festival as a wonderful oud player, maker and someone who really understands the instrument," said Turner.

The event may be a special occasion, but to Shaheen, it's business as usual. On any given day, when he isn't busy preparing orders or catching up with friends, Shaheen can often be found plucking an oud, one of the stringed instruments that line the shop's walls. Gourd-shaped and flat-faced, the oud

has ancient origins on the Arabian peninsula, and Shaheen, widely known as "the oudman," makes and plays them. He also teaches private lessons and in special programs at New York University and The New School.

The oud's fretless strings produce quarter tones, those that would fall between the black and white keys on a piano.

"It sounds terrible — like eating bad falafel, with a lot of oil in it," Shaheen said with his customary humor. He's referring to the oud's microtonal notes, which are common to Arabic musical traditions but sound off to Western ears.

Nevertheless, he thinks the oud is the "greatest stringed instrument by far. It's the father of the lute, mandolin and guitar. It has great sound quality and carthiness."

Shaheen, who was born in Haifa, Israel and came to New York to attend college in 1967, comes from a long lineage of "oudmen." His father, grandfather and great-grandfather all played. His grandfather, also named Najib, was a poet, den-

tist, church cantor and instrument maker.

"I was 8 or 9 years old, and I was working with him," Shaheen said. "I told myself that someday, I'm going to make these instruments."

Today he not only makes and restores them, he also frequently performs at concert halls and educational venues with an ensemble that includes his brother, the world-renowned oud and violin virtuoso, Simon Shaheen. In addition to classical chamber performances, they play fusion music, combining African, Turkish, Indian or jazz influences.

"And honey," Shaheen said, "We're good! Not only the falafel is good."

Of course, the falafel — a blend of spices and chickpeas fried into crisp patties — isn't just "good." Shaheen will argue it's "the best ever," and he has the testimonials to support his claim.

"I came three days in a row one time, until he said I wasn't allowed to come anymore," said Nora White, who lives in the neighborhood. "It's the best falafel in the world." A letter Shaheen displays in the shop window, from a self-proclaimed falafel connoisseur, echoes the sentiment. "Your falafels are extraordinary creations, completely superior to any falafel I've tasted on this continent."

Falafels don't just get to be extraordinary by themselves. Shaheen has always taken the quality of his food, and the cleanliness of his kitchen, seriously. At the same time, he's easy-going for a businessman, showing little concern for marketing; the shop doesn't even have a sign.

He attributes this to having fallen into the business accidentally. As the story goes, he was visiting friends on Graham Avenue who sent him across the street to a donut shop.

"They said, 'Some of your

MUSIC

Najib Shaheen will perform at 7 pm on March 5 at Najeb's Place (274 Graham Ave. at Skillman Avenue in Williamsburg) with Bassam Saba in "Oud-Off: Oud and Qahwa," part of the "Brooklyn Maqam Arab Music Festival." Admission is free. For information, call (718) 387-8333 or visit www.brooklynartscouncil.org.

people are over there." It turned out to be a Jordanian guy who once dated my cousin," recalled Shaheen. "They ran a terrible place. I made them an offer. I was serious. I'm still not serious." He ended up taking over the lease, both because it was too good a deal to pass up, and to help out an old friend.

But at this point, he's ready to end his foray in professional falafel making. He's going to concentrate on life as an oudman and spend some time catching up with family in southern California.

"I'm going to the desert," said Shaheen. "I'm going back to my ancestors."

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Hardening of the arteries, called atherosclerosis, occurs when cholesterol and fat deposits build up over time. This causes a blood vessel to narrow and stiffen, restricting blood flow. While atherosclerosis can happen in any blood vessel in the body, it is most harmful in the carotid arteries in the neck, which feed blood to the brain. If the brain does not get a constant amount of blood, this can lead to a loss of function in part of the brain — otherwise known as a stroke. Some of the first signs of a stroke are sudden weakness, numbness, and inability to speak. A stroke can be damaging and potentially fatal.

Fortunately, some basic lifestyle changes can reduce your risk of stroke and hardening of the arteries. Smoking is one of the biggest risk factors. Quitting smoking is the simplest way to reduce your chance of stroke or a heart attack. Other important steps include controlling your blood pressure and lowering your cholesterol level. This can be done through exercise, a healthy diet, and maintaining a reasonable weight.

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While this procedure is not right for every patient, it can have several advantages. No general anesthesia is needed, reducing the risk of postoperative complications. The procedure typically requires a shorter hospital stay and recovery time, and it may be a better option for certain high-risk patients.

At Maimonides, we offer carotid screening and other tests to determine a patient's stroke risk. If further action is needed, we work with patients to devise a treatment plan best suited to their needs.

Take the necessary steps to reduce your risk of atherosclerosis and stroke. If your doctor recommends that you see a vascular specialist, please contact me at (718) 283-7957 so we can discuss what options are right for you.



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In the buff

Cool workouts help Brooklynites get in shape for swimsuit season

By Linnea Covington
for The Brooklyn Paper

Everybody makes his New Year's resolution to exercise more, but few people can find the time or the willpower to stick with it. Now that we're two months into 2008 — and just a few more away from hitting the beaches — fitness fanatics across the borough are finding it easy to stay in shape thanks to the wide range of classes that local gyms are offering. And although you might not have worn spandex since step aerobics first hit town, with classes that employ everything from trapezes to martial arts, even your sense of adventure will get a workout.

BODY ELITE GYM

Of all the dance-inspired classes at Body Elite Gym in Carroll Gardens, "Soul Ballet" is the most popular. "It incorporates ballet for a cardio workout and muscle conditioning," said fitness manager Michelle Almaguá. Instructor and professional dancer Rey Santiago has been teaching for years and whips his class into shape by helping you improve balance and body strength. The hour-long session includes dancing, yoga and aerobics.

"The soul is definitely in the music as you work out in your bare feet to improve the core balance," said Almaguá. "Soul Ballet" is offered at 9:30 am on Thursdays at Body Elite Gym (348 Court St. at Union Street in Carroll Gardens). A day pass to the gym is \$15; a monthly membership is \$67. For information, call (718) 935-0088 or visit www.bodyelitegym.com.

EASTERN ATHLETIC CLUB

Newcomers would be forgiven for thinking Eastern Athletic Club, with locations in Brooklyn Heights and Prospect Park, is a nightclub. The gym is



Step, step, hi-YAH! At Eastern Athletic Club in Brooklyn Heights, dance-inspired workouts include "Capoeira," an ancient Brazilian form of martial arts, demonstrated by instructor Antonio Jacobs.

heavy on dance-inspired workouts including classes in "Capoeira," an ancient Brazilian form of martial arts, and "Nia Technique," which fuses ballet, karate and Pilates. "We find that the Brooklyn residents love to move," said Aisha Cowart, fitness director of the club. "The more dance classes we offer, the more we get them in a cardiovascular workout." But don't be fooled. Although these exercises look beautiful, they're still tough on your body. So, much like trying out a new move on the dance floor, it's smart to take it easy

during your first two visits. "Capoeira" is offered at 6:30 pm on Tuesdays and "Nia Technique" is offered at 10:15 am on Saturdays at Eastern Athletic Club (43 Clark St. between Hicks and Henry streets in Brooklyn Heights, (718) 625-0500). The "Nia Technique" is also offered at 9:30 am on Mondays at the Prospect Heights location (17 Eastern Pkwy. at Underhill Avenue, (718) 789-4600). For \$25 you can use any of the club's facilities for the day; monthly membership is \$110. For more information, visit easternathleticclub.com.

Put up yer dukes: At Harbor Fitness in Park Slope, Michelle Rodriguez puts her skills to the test with instructor Mikhail Kipnis in "Fight Club" class.

ESPAÑA-STREB TRAPEZE ACADEMY

Bring your workout to new heights with an "Aerial Yoga" class at España-Streb Trapeze Academy. "Aerial Yoga" begins with traditional yoga "asanas" (poses) on the floor and then moves to the trapeze. "It's about moving through space and eliminating the transitions," said Education Director Sarah Donnelly. Not only does it claim to relax your mind, but the class will utilize your whole body as a base of support while building muscle strength. Find inner peace off the ground while improving shoulders and core.

"Aerial Yoga" is offered Saturdays at noon and 1:30 pm or Mondays at 7 pm by reservation only at Streb Laboratory for Action Mechanics (SLAM), 51 N. First St. at Metropolitan Avenue in Williamsburg. Each 90-minute class costs \$15. For more information, call (718) 384-6491 or visit www.strebuaa.org.

HARBOR FITNESS CENTER

So you always wanted to be in "Fight Club"? Now you can at Harbor Fitness Center's version of the club. In their "Fight Club" class, the instructor is padded from head to toe, so you can practice boxing with a real person.

Fitness Manager Jodi Heywood said that the members "love the 'Fight Club' class, because it takes the skills and moves they have learned in kickboxing and puts them into action." Participants take turns with the teacher for one-on-one instruction while the others practice with the punching bags. This class works out your entire body and helps to hone self-defense skills.

"Fight Club" is offered from 9 to 10 am on Wednesdays at Harbor Fitness Center (191 15th St. between Fourth and Fifth avenues, (718) 965-6200). Other classes are offered at the Bay Ridge location (9215 Fourth Ave. at 92nd Street in Bay Ridge, (718) 836-0000). Buy an unlimited guest pass for the day for \$20. For more information, call or visit www.harborfitness.com.

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12 DAYS...

Continued from page 2

Glenn Opera House, 30 Lafayette Ave. (718) 634-4100.

THEATER: Brooklyn College Theater Department presents "Take Me Out," \$12, \$10 seniors, \$5 Brooklyn College students, 7:30 pm. Geraldine Theater, 2900 Bedford Ave. (718) 951-4500.

CONCERT: St. Ann's Warehouse presents "Essential Cinema," a concert with John Zorn and his band, \$30, 8 pm. 38 West St. (718) 254-8777.

FIRST WEEKEND: Brooklyn Arts Exchange presents "Notes from Underground: A Degrading Play," based on the novel by Fyodor Dostoevsky, \$15, 8 pm. 575 Metropolitan Ave. (212) 352-3101.

OTHER: Brooklyn Museum. Event features music, dance and art-making classes to celebrate Women's History Month. Highlights include Colombian music with Lucia Pulido at 4 pm. Chalkboard poet Cecilia Vicuña reads at 6 pm. Ballet Folklórico Ysaora performs from 6:30 pm to 7 pm. Interactive family discussion at 7 pm. Film "Twelve Rising" (2005) at 8:30 pm. More dance party from 9 pm to 11 pm. 200 Eastern Parkway. (718) 624-5000 for more information. Free.

BAG SALE: Sell Hip Kids Reale Clothing Store hosts a bag sale. 11 am to 3 pm. Grand Ave. (718) 798-0008.

GREEN HOUSE EFFECT: Event features an exhibit to raise awareness of the environmental effects of personal choices. Explore a home of the future: model apartment has been transformed to showcase green products, services and lifestyle choices. 11 am to 6 pm. 361 Manhattan Ave. (718) 634-4100.

REGGIO WORKSHOP: Espinoza/STREET Trapeze Academy presents an aerial performance (regio workshop for performers and riggers). \$22, 11 am to 6 pm. 1st St. (718) 984-4491.

STRESS RELIEF: Soulshine Family Wellness Center hosts a workshop to teach a proven relaxation technique. Noon and 2 pm. 917 Eighth Ave. Reservations recommended. (718) 622-4983.

CURATOR TALK: Patricia Amelsson, Associate Curator of Photography at Brooklyn Museum, gives a talk in the exhibit "Goodbye, Coney Island!" \$8, 54 students and seniors, free for members and children 12 and younger. 3 pm. 200 Eastern Pkwy. (718) 634-5000.

ART TALK: Kentler International Drawing Space offers a talk by its curators on "Native Voices: Contemporary Indigenous Art. Works on Paper." 4 pm. 50 Van Brunt St. (718) 875-2098. Free.

RECEPTION: Brooklyn Artists Guild presents "The Sympathizer and the City." 6 pm to 9 pm. 146 Seventh St. (718) 859-9666. Free.

RECEPTION: Humble Arts Foundation, in collaboration with Ludus Lodges, presents "31 Under 31: Young Women in Art Photography." 7 pm to 9 pm. after

party 9 pm to midnight. The Gallery at Third Ward, 195 Morgan Ave. (718) 715-6951. Free.

WINE 101: The Center for Kasher Culinary Arts hosts a class in what every wine drinker needs to know. \$40, 6:30 pm to 10:30 pm. 1407 Coney Island Ave. (718) 692-2442.

SUN, MARCH 2
OUTDOORS AND TOURS
ICE SKATING: At Prospect Park's Wallman Park, \$5, \$3 kids and seniors, \$4 skate rental. Sessions at 10 am to 1 pm; 2 pm to 6 pm; 7 pm to 10 pm. Enter park at Lincoln Road and Ocean Avenue. (718) 655-8999.

PUBLIC SKATING: At Aviator Sports, \$8, \$4 kids, \$4 skate rental. Noon to 3 pm and 5 pm to 8 pm. Hanger 5, Floyd Bennett Field. (718) 758-7500.

PERFORMANCE
ARAB MUSIC FEST: Brooklyn Arts Council hosts an Arab music festival with concerts, symposia and workshops. Today, Brooklyn Museum begins with dance and music from the Arab world. 2 pm to 5 pm. Walk Whitman Theatre at Brooklyn College, 2900 Campus Rd. (718) 625-0000. Free.

MUSIC: "Education: Classical Sound Tunes of the Broadway Stage," features popular classical themes and Broadway show tunes. 2 pm to 4 pm. Salt Marsh Nature Center, 3302 Ave. U. (718) 421-2021. Free.

CONCERT: The Duffell Choirs present "In Sound and Vision," an exploration of America's developing identity. \$25, 8 pm. The concert at 8:30 pm. Old First Reformed Church, 729 Carroll St. (718) 832-8224.

ST. ANNA'S WAREHOUSE: presents Cynthia Higgins and Gloria Delaney, "Transmissions from the Future." \$20 premium seating and CDS reserved seating. 7:30 Water St. (718) 254-8777.

MUSIC: Using silent black and white films from the Scottish scene and from the 1920s as a backdrop to a live music score. "The Old Man and the Sea" with guitar playing and Gaelic songs. 4 pm. The Old Stone House, 198 Newmarket Street. (718) 768-3195.

THEATER: "Take Me Out." 7 pm. See Sat, March 1.

DANCE: Above and Beyond Dance presents a contemporary dance. 3 pm. See Sat, March 1.

BALLET: State Ballet of Georgia. 3 pm. See Sat, March 1.

MUSICAL REVIEW: "From Broadway to Bay Ridge." 4 pm. See Sat, March 1.

OTHER
FLEA MARKET: at St. Fido's Center. 9 am to 3 pm. 1825 Bath Ave. (718) 236-3312. Free.

PLATFORM: Brooklyn School of Community Art presents Leader Lial Burns in a talk titled "Ocean of Delusion." Authentic Community and Ethical Democracy. 11 am. 55 Prospect Park West. (718) 768-2722. Free.

FILM: Moviemakers presents "The Royal Tenenbaums" and "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest." \$5, 8 pm. Galapagos Art Space, 70 N. 4th St. (718) 384-0386.

AUTHOR SERIES: Performing Arts Center at Kingsborough Community College presents mystery writer David Baldacci. Free. 7:30 pm. Also, wine and cheese reception with author. \$10, 6:30 pm to 7:30 pm. 2001 Oriental Blvd. (718) 384-0051.

PASSOVER DESSERTS: The Center for Kasher Culinary Arts hosts a class in dessert recipes for Passover. \$70, 6:30 pm to 9:30 pm. 1407 Coney Island Ave.

Black History Month events

Weds, Feb 27

DAYLONG CELEBRATION: Stepping Stone Residence, a program for people with psychiatric disabilities, celebrates Black History Month with speaking "Our. The Power of Our Voice." featuring a historic re-enactment of Martin Luther King's powerful sermon, readings by residents, dance programs and more. Call for location information. (718) 852-4032. Free.

STORYTELLING: Dr. Joyce Duncan and Anne Harrison, author of "Soul, 250 You Can Speak Again," 4 pm to 8 pm. Brooklyn Museum. (718) 634-4100.

FILM FESTIVAL: BAMCinefest presents "Cuba, An African Odyssey," at 4:30. "African American in Exile Program" including "Josephine Baker: Black in Paris" at 7:30 pm. "Cuba Venetia in a White Man's World" and "Black as Ink" at 9:30 pm. All shows are \$11. 30 Lafayette Ave. (718) 634-4100.

THURS, FEB 28
BROOKLYN HISTORICAL SOCIETY: presents opening of exhibit "Reflections on Community Development: Stories from Bedford-Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation." Learn the history of how federal and community actions to transform an economically depressed urban area.

Story is told through oral histories, documents and photographs. \$5, 54 students and seniors, \$30. 128 Pierrepont St. (718) 421-2021. Free.

FILM FESTIVAL: BAMCinefest presents "The Best of the African Diaspora Film Festival." Today, "Iron Ladies of Usher" at 4:30 pm. "The President Has AIDS" at 6:50 pm. "Noussou N'Dour: Return to Goree" at 9:15 pm. All shows are \$11. 30 Lafayette Ave. (718) 634-4100.

FRI, FEB 29
FUNDRAISER: The Museum of Contemporary Art of the African Diaspora, formerly a stage on the Underground Railroad. \$100 suggested donation. 7 pm. Central Gallery, 334 Grand Ave. (718) 758-7500.

ARAB MUSIC FEST: Brooklyn Arts Council hosts an Arab music festival with concerts, symposia and workshops. Today, "Hanging Your Ear: Learning to Listen to Arab Music." 6:30 pm to 8 pm. Powerhouse Arena, 37 Grand Ave. (718) 625-0080. Free.

PERFORMANCE WORKSHOP: Brooklyn Arts Exchange presents "Creating Your Own Work," taught by Victoria Liberman. \$125, 7 pm to 9:30 pm. Workshop dates: Tuesdays, March 4 to 25, 421 Fifth Ave. (718) 832-4018.

READ AND DRINK NIGHT: Phoebe Demosch "Service Industry." David Werdich "Imperial." And Kara Zuzo "I Like Food: Food Tastes Good!" discuss and sign their books. \$35, 7 pm to 9 pm. 1407 Coney Island Ave. (718) 692-2442.

VOICES OF THE RAINBOW: Reading series at Long Island University presents Giorgio Panfili and Jennifer Knox. 10 am. DeWitt Avenue and Flatbush Avenue Extension, Health Sciences Building, room 119. (718) 488-1015. Free.

YOGA AND PLATES: Ongoing classes. \$15, 11 am to 2:15 pm. 30 St. Felix St. (718) 625-0080. Free.

BUSINESS WORKSHOP: Church Avenue Merchants Business Association offers the talk "How to Repair Your Credit." 2 pm to 3:30 pm. 884 Flatbush Ave. (718) 282-2500. ext. 242. Free.

CONTINUING ED: Brooklyn Bar Association offers continuing education credits for the lecture "Evidence Updates 2008." \$70 at the door, 6 pm to 8 pm. 123 Remond St. (718) 624-6675.

AUTHOR SERIES: Performing Arts Center at Kingsborough Community College presents mystery writer David Baldacci. Free. 7:30 pm. Also, wine and cheese reception with author. \$10, 6:30 pm to 7:30 pm. 2001 Oriental Blvd. (718) 384-0051.

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Josephine Baker: Black Diva in a White Man's World screens Feb. 27 at the BAM Rose Cinemas in Fort Greene.

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on forgotten Greenpoint. 7:30 pm. 126 Franklin St. (718) 383-0096. Free.

THEATER: "Take Me Out." 7:30 pm. See Sat, March 8.

THE BRICK: "Notes from Underground: A Degrading Play." 8 pm. See Sat, March 8.

FRI, MARCH 7
FILM: Brooklyn Academy of Music's Rose Cinemas presents "The Talking Pictures of Manuel de Oliveira." \$11 per screening. \$7.50 students and seniors. "Aniki Bello" (1962, 6:30 pm) and "15 pm." "Christopher Columbus, the Enigma" (2007, 7 pm). O.S.A. with Marcello Oliveira follows 7 pm screening. 30 Lafayette Ave. (718) 634-4100.

FILM: "Alghaz Women: A History of Struggle." 7:30 pm. Park Slope United Methodist Church, 410 Sixth Ave. (718) 788-1164. Free.

SYMPHONY: One World Symphony presents "Rhapsody (an theme by Paganini)." Metal vs. Classical" featuring works by Rachmaninoff, Brahms, Dvorak and Liszt. \$30, \$20 students and seniors. 8 pm. St. Ann and the Holy Trinity, 157 West 12th St. (718) 642-7275.

CELTIC POWER: Brooklyn Center for the Performing Arts at Brooklyn College presents Leahy, an eight-member brood and sister metal and step-dancing group. \$25 and \$40, 8 pm. Walk Whitman Theatre at Brooklyn College, 2900 Campus Rd. (718) 951-4500.

GOOD COFFEEHOUSE: presents its Evening Troubadour series with Art Esinger. \$15, \$8 kids, 8 pm. 33 Prospect Park West at Second Street. (718) 768-2722.

JAZZ: Sugar Music presents two sets: Alexia Fila, vocals at 8 pm and Tucuma Brothers, tenor sax at 9:15 pm. 512 St. Anne House, Fifth Avenue between Third and Fourth. (718) 768-7535.

ARAB MUSIC FEST: Brooklyn Arts Council continues its Arab music festival with "Oud City: Oud and Qawwali." 7 pm to 9 pm. Najada's Place, 374 Grand Ave. (718) 625-0080. Free.

THEATER: "Take Me Out." 7:30 pm. See Sat, March 8.

GREEK THEATER: "Iphigenia." 7:30 pm. See Sat, March 8.

THE BRICK: "Notes from Underground: A Degrading Play." 8 pm. See Sat, March 8.

THURS, MARCH 6
EXHIBIT: Installation "Demolished" by Brandon Elan. 3 pm to 7 pm. Phyllis Stagliano Gallery, 62 Eighth Ave. (718) 634-6009. Free.

LECTURE: Relive your childhood during a talk on "Street Games." 4 pm. For Greene Park Visitor's Center. Enter through the entrance at Washington Park. (718) 722-3218. Free.

RECEPTION: Powerhouse Arena hosts a reception for art and film "Hamburger Eyes: Inside Burgerworld." 6 pm to 9 pm. 37 Mar St. (718) 999-9454. Free.

GROUP SHOW: Reception for exhibit: "Deconstruction," an art show that explores the tension between the ephemeral and the eternal. 6 pm to 9 pm. Henry Greig Gallery, 111 Front St. (718) 228-1718. \$58-100. Free.

ARAB MUSIC FEST: Brooklyn Arts Council continues its Arab music festival with "Turning Your Ear: Learning to Listen to Arab Music." 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm. Safe Gallery, 111 Front St. (718) 228-1718. \$58-100. Free.

JAZZ AT BARGE MUSIC: Ted Rosenthal Trio plays. \$35, \$30 seniors, \$20 students. 8 pm. Fulton Ferry Landing, Old Fulton Street at the East River. (718) 624-5000. Free.

WORD MUSIC: presents Kevin Walsh, author of "Fragments New York: The Story of a Lost Metropolis." He gives a talk

Opera presents "Cavalleria Rusticana," by Pietro Mascagni. \$20, \$10 students and seniors. 3:30 pm. Brooklyn Academy of Music/Henry Street. (717) 642-6925.

OPERA: Regine Opera House. Fully staged production of Verdi's "La Traviata," sung in Italian. \$25, \$15 seniors, \$5 teens, kids free. 7 pm. Regina Hall, 650 West 12th Avenue. (718) 222-9536.

CONCERT: Brooklyn Philharmonic presents John Adams' "Chorale at Big Sur." \$20 to \$40, 7:30 pm. Brooklyn Academy of Music/Henry Street. (718) 642-6925.

THEATER: "Take Me Out." 7:30 pm. See Sat, March 8.

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LIST YOUR EVENT...

To list your event in *Nine Days in Brooklyn*, please give us two weeks notice or more. Send your listing by e-mail: calendar@brooklynpaper.com; by mail: GO Brooklyn, The Brooklyn Paper, 55 Washington St., Suite 624, Brooklyn, NY 11201; or by fax: (718) 834-9278. Listings are free and printed on a space available basis. We regret we cannot take listings over the phone.

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PS15 will not be shared



Parents at PS 15, on Sullivan Street in Red Hook, have won their fight against a charter school inside their building.

By Mike McLaughlin
The Brooklyn Paper

The city is backtracking on its plan to wedge a charter school inside a half-half Red Hook school, now saying that it is searching for another site for the newcomer academy.

The announcement came after parents, teachers and even the widow of the beloved former principal of PS 15, an elementary school on Sullivan Street, were outraged that they would have to cede classrooms to the PAVE Academy.

In case a different location isn't found, Department of Education will meet with school officials and community leaders to gain acceptance for PAVE, which might still land in PS 15.

Teachers say this is a good step.

"It looks like they're trying to correct the way they went about things," said one teacher requesting anonymity.

Parents don't want the charter school in PS 15 because they say the loss of space jeopardizes the "A" grade that the school just earned on its city report card.

"The kids are going to lose out on a lot of the things they have now," said Vicki LaBelle, a parent who was gathering signatures on her anti-charter school petition earlier this month.

School Principal Peggy Wynn-Madison echoed that concern last week, telling parents that the charter school could increase class size — and small class size was one of the main reasons for the school's success on the report card, she added.

The city says any concern about class size is not valid. PS 15 — also known as the Daily School, in memory of its slain principal Patrick Daly — is only 54 percent full and has declining enrollment.

The Department of Education says such statistics indicate that there's room for the 88-student PAVE Academy to take over four classrooms and one administrative room in September — and then two more classrooms in 2009.

"We expect there to be no effect on class size" at PS 15, said Melody Meyer, a DOE spokeswoman.

The class size might stay the same, but the loss of space is still a burden, teachers said.

Currently, students go to different rooms for different subjects like math and social studies, giving teachers free time and a quiet space for prep work. They'll lose that downtime in a shared school.

Sharing the building with the new charter school for two years might be an inconvenience to PS 15's teachers, but the city says it's a benefit for Red Hook families.

"The proposal gives families in Red Hook two great schools to choose from where they previously had one school," Meyer told The Brooklyn Paper.

The debate over this charter school is a faint echo of last year's contentious battle over setting the Khalil Gibran International Academy — the city's first Arabic language and culture school — in a Park Slope middle school. At the time, parents complained that their under-capacity school also did not have the space to accommodate a new middle school.

Parents in that battle prevailed, and the Gibran Academy was eventually housed in a Boerum Hill middle- and high-school complex. Parents and educators there accepted the Gibran Academy after the city agreed to provide some long-sought amenities — a bit of horseshooting that may be happening now at PS 15.

The PAVE Academy — the name stands for Perseverance, Achievement, Vibrance and Excellent Character — will start with just a kindergarten and a first grade in 2008, but eventually be a K-8 school.

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A settlement has been proposed in *L.V., et al. v. New York City Department of Education, et al.*, No. 03 Civ. 917 (S.D.N.Y.), a class action lawsuit concerning whether the New York City Department of Education ("DOE") failed to fully and timely take the actions required by impartial hearing officers' orders concerning students with disabilities. The proposed settlement has two parts. The first part requires the DOE to fully and timely implement orders in the future at specified rates over an extended period of time to achieve a maximum percentage of orders implemented, and also creates a more streamlined system for enforcing any future orders that are not implemented in a timely fashion. The second part allows certain Class Members to receive compensatory relief relating to orders that were not implemented in the past.

WHO IS INCLUDED?

Anyone who has obtained a favorable order by an Impartial Hearing Officer against the DOE or a stipulation of settlement placed on the record at an impartial hearing with the DOE and fails or failed to obtain full and timely implementation of such order or settlement is a Class Member if:

- (1) their order is dated between December 13, 2000 and January 31, 2008 (the "Compensatory Relief Subclass").
- (2) their order is dated on or after December 13, 2003 (the "Injunctive Relief Subclass").

You may be a member of both Subclasses. Members of the Compensatory Relief Subclass have certain rights to opt out of this Subclass.

All Class Members have the right to be heard and/or object regarding the proposed settlement. The Court will hold a Settlement Fairness Hearing on April 10, 2008 at 10:00 a.m., or such adjourned date and time as the Court may set, to consider whether to approve the proposed settlement. If the proposed settlement is approved, Class Members cannot be part of any other lawsuit against the defendants about the legal issues in this case except that (1) people who received orders dated between December 13, 2000 and January 31, 2008 and properly opt out keep their right to pursue individual litigation and (2) people who receive orders dated on or after February 1, 2008 will have the right to seek relief concerning their individual orders pursuant to a streamlined procedure that is part of the proposed settlement.

You can obtain the documents relating to the proposed settlement at www.hearingordersettlement.com.

February 23/March 1, 2008

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PARENT

Being a good mom means more than not being bad

SMART mom

By Louise Crawford

Novelist Ayelet Waldman caught a lot of flack when she wrote in the New York Times that she loves her husband, writer Michael Chabon, more than she loves her children.

That's a weird thing to say (no matter how much Smartmom likes Chabon's work). How do you measure such things — with a scale, or a measuring cup? Do you monitor your heartbeats, heavy breathing or the swelling of your chest?

The media, especially the biographers, went berserk over Waldman's honest (if strange) assertion, and Waldman became the poster mama for bad mommies everywhere.

Then came Britney, the prom queen of moms you never want to have. She takes drugs around her kids, and drives her pick-up truck with her son on her lap without a seat belt.

She's guilty of one egregious act of bad mommymodern after another. She's also, apparently, mentally ill. Still, the public can't get enough of her via the celebrity magazines, blogs, and television shows.

Waldman, in a recent issue of *New York Magazine*, empathizes with Spears for all the public vitriol that she has had to endure and tries to explain why the public (especially other mothers) likes to vilify mothers.

"One way to find consolation in the face of all this failure and guilt is to judge ourselves not against the impossible standard of the Good Mother, but against the fun-house-mirror image of Bad Mother. By defining for us the kind of mother we're not, the Bad Mother makes it easier for us to live with what we are."

So that's the standard now? Badmums knows, we can't live up to the Berkeley Carroll ideal of the perfect stroller mom, but can it really be that Waldman believes that it's good enough to just stay one step above lousy moms like Britney, Ayelet Wald-

man, or Andrea Yates, who drowned her five children in a bathtub?

But being "better than bad" is not the same as being good. And what is a "good" mom and how do you know whether you are or aren't? There's got to be some objective standards, right?

The problem is that it's hard to quantify. That's why things like extreme selflessness, baking cookies and sewing homemade Halloween costumes have become misplaced markers of mommy achievement.

Baking cookies has always been one of those good mom measurements. Do you? How often? And from scratch or mix? And selflessness — that gets (homemade) brownie points.

What about when a mom needs some medication or has to sell a night with the girls and some margaritas? Never. I'll just sit by the crib and suffer, she thinks.

But some of the best moms we never know know how to be selfish or the difference between Duncan Hines, Betty Crocker or *Bar Mitzvah*.

That's because none of that stuff has anything to do with good parenting. What's really important is how you talk to your kids and whether they feel loved for who they are.

Smartmom believes that good mothering comes in many sizes, shapes and colors. But there are, of course, some mommy basics:

Moms (in partnership with dads) are required to love, feed, clothe, shelter, discipline, and educate their children. They must make them feel warm and secure, comfort them when they are sick; hold them (and listen to them) when they are sad.

Still it takes a whole lot more to live the Mommy sweethearts. Here are some of the ways that Smartmom has tried to win the crown:

• Reading the entire "All of a Kind Family" series to OSFO and agreeing not to cry at the sad parts?

• Forcing Teen Spirit to take that musical theater class in fourth grade. He hated doing it but Smartmom was — you guessed it — trying to be a good mom.

• Throwing elaborate, themed birthday parties for Teen Spirit (Beatles, Harry Potter and "Who

Wants to be a Millionaire"? • And what about all those trips to see the dinosaurs and the dioramas at the Museum of Natural History with Teen Spirit and those endless hours in the basement of the Children's Museum of Manhattan with OSFO?

Doesn't that stuff count for something? Ask your kid. The real time to measure whether you are a good mom or not will be 20 or 30 years from now when your kid is sitting in a therapist's office talking about the long or short list of terrible things you did as a parent.

The shortest list wins the mommy Olympics. And you can bet that baking cookies or making Halloween costumes won't be the crux of the issue. Smartmom can just imagine what Teen Spirit and OSFO will have to say about the emotional damage she — inadvertently, mind you! — caused them.

Will Teen Spirit tell his therapist about the time she slapped him in the face when he refused to write a memoir for his third-grade teacher?

Will OSFO tell her therapist about all the times Smartmom embarrassed her in front of her friends?

Will they complain about how often she has been to the gym?

Will they hate her for calling them Teen Spirit and the Oh So Feisty One in her Brooklyn Paper column?

All this talk about good and bad mothering got Smartmom thinking about a good mother she has known.

Smartmom's mom, Manhattan's mother, was famous for refusing to move to the suburbs when everyone was ditching the city for backyards and bulgarnes in Westchester.

An urban mom years before there was Urban Baby, diner was take-out from the sally-defunct Williams' BBQ on the Upper West Side and a San Lee brownie. Saturday meant a Fred Astaire movie at the Thalia or the Martha Graham Dance Company at City Center.

But most important, Manhattan's mother was a loving person who was always great to talk to, analytical and incisive as needed.

Sure, Smartmom has spent years complaining about her mother with her therapist about

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FAMILY CALENDAR

Compiled by Susan Rosenthal Jay



Care Bears on Fire will play BAM at noon on Saturday.

WEDNESDAY, FEB. 27

6 pm: Borough President Melancon, 22, Joyce Duncan and Lucy Anne Hutton read kids stories. Borough Hall 209

SATURDAY, MARCH 1

11 am and 2 pm: Art workshop. Brooklyn Museum (200 Eastern Pkwy., at Washington Avenue in Slope) \$8

12:30 pm and 2:30 pm: Puppet show. See Saturday, March 1.

SUNDAY, MARCH 2

12:30 pm and 2:30 pm: Puppet show. See Saturday, March 1.

1 pm: Kid's day in Prospect Park with readings, history, storytelling, zookeeper chats and more. Call (718) 638-7700 for info and location.

SATURDAY, MARCH 8

10:30 am: Short film fest. Brooklyn Academy of Music (30 Lafayette Ave., at Ashland

Place in Fort Greene) \$7.50 kids, \$11 adults. Call (718) 636-4105 for info.

Noon: Care Bears on Fire. Brooklyn Academy of Music (30 Lafayette Ave., at Ashland Place in Fort Greene) \$7. Call (718) 636-4105 for info.

Noon: Open house. Brooklyn Arts Exchange (421 E. 12th St. at Eighth Street in Park Slope) Free. Call (718) 832-0018 for info.

12:30 pm and 2:30 pm: "Cinderella." See Saturday, March 1.

SUNDAY, MARCH 9

11 am: Short film fest. See Saturday, March 8.

Noon: Tiny Masters of Today. Brooklyn Academy of Music (30 Lafayette Ave., at Ashland Place in Fort Greene) \$7. Call (718) 636-4105 for info.

2 pm: Plant growing. Brooklyn Botanic Garden (1000 Washington Ave.)

12:30 pm and 2:30 pm: "Cinderella." See Saturday, March 1.

To list your event, e-mail calendar@brooklynpaper.com

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State of North Carolina, County of Cumberland
In the General Court of Justice District Court Division, File No. 07JT 23
In the Matter of Adria Baptista, a minor child, Kenya Dorela Dupree, Petitioner, vs. Chelsia Ok Baptista, Respondent. Notice of Service by Publication.
Take Notice that a pleading seeking relief against you has been filed in the above captioned action. The nature of the relief being sought is as follows:
Termination of Parental Rights upon the grounds that for a continuous period of more than six months Respondent has failed to have any contact with the minor child.
You are required to make defense to such pleading no later than the 10th day of April, 2008, and upon your failure to do so, the party seeking service against you will apply to the Court for relief sought.
This 29th day of February, 2008.
Sherry Miller, Attorney for the Plaintiff, Miller, King & Clouse, 108 Hay Street, Fayetteville, NC 28302.

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POLICE...

Continued from page 4

up to them and said, "Give me your money!" They told him they didn't have any, so the enraged — or maybe that deranged — man raised his umbrella and beat them on the head before running off.

He didn't take anything, and the teens walked to Brooklyn Hospital — only a block away — for treatment for their minor head injuries.

Plumber plumb
A burglar broke into a Cumberland Street business and stole over \$1,200 in plumbing equipment on Feb. 11.

The 51-year-old handyman locked up his business — which was under renovation — at around 4 p.m. and came back to the brownstone, near Greene Avenue, at 7:30 a.m. to discover that \$1,245 in tools were gone.

Car crimes
At least two cars were broken into and another one was stolen last week in Fort Greene.

Teen thugs
A trio of violent young delinquents assaulted a man walking down South Oxford Street on Feb. 15 and stole the iPod from his car.

The 23-year-old was near Hanson Place around 7 p.m. enjoying his digital music device when the three budding criminals ran up to him and shoved him against a car. They ran their hands through the surprised man's pockets and came up with his iPod, yanking the earphones out of his ears and fleeing down Hanson Place.

The victim described the boys as all being around 15 years old.

— Harry Chedde

76th Precinct

Boy wonder

Three teens robbed and attacked a 10-year-old boy on the corner of Clinton and Union streets on Feb. 15.

The brutes pushed the lad to ground, kicking him in the face and head several times around 5 p.m. and stealing his mobile phone and \$3.

The victim was taken to Long Island College Hospital to treat his minor injuries to his head and knee.

Pillaged

A thief looted various odds-and-ends from a rented storage space on Loraine Street sometime between Feb. 9 and 10.

The man renting a locker in a business between Clinton and Court streets secured his valuables at 5 p.m. but when he re-

turned at 1:30 p.m. the next day, the lock was gone.

The burglar stole a weed whacker, engraver, portable radio and a power drill.

Four mug
Court thugs mugged a woman on Court Street on Feb. 12.

Three men and one woman encircled the victim at 1 a.m. between Amity and Congress streets, one of them pressing an unknown, hard object against her hip as a further threat.

Not wanting any more trouble, the victim gave the muggers her purse, containing jewelry and a gold pen, but no cash.

— Mike McLaughlin

90th Precinct

Exes attack

Two exes beat up their former lovers in separate, but equally horrifying, incidents.

In the first case, a 41-year-old man was arrested on Feb. 13 for allegedly attacking a 28-year-old woman in her own apartment because she wouldn't sleep with him, said cops.

The victim said that the thug came to her South Eighth Street apartment, between Berry Street and Bedford Avenue, at around 2:30 a.m. and started arguing with her because she refused to let him have his way.

He proceeded to choke her and tried to stab her with a corkscrew, ultimately knocking her to the ground and piercing her left foot with the bottle opener. He was charged with assault.

In a similar incident on Ten Eyck Walk, a guy allegedly pushed his way into a 37-year-old woman's apartment at 6 a.m. on Feb. 13, shoved her into the bedroom and onto the bed and tried to suffocate her.

Her children were in the next room at the time.

During the struggle in the apartment, which is between Leonard Street and Manhattan Avenue, he also pulled out two knives and tried to cut her face.

The children heard the struggle and called the cops, causing the suspect to flee, but not before cutting his victim on the face with a box-cutter.

Burglar bonanza

It was a bonanza fortnight for burglars, who raided no less than eight homes and one business in Williamsburg, but one crime stood out: a smash-and-grab job at a Varick Avenue auto repair shop.

In the first, and perhaps most spectacular, incident, burglars busted through the concrete wall of a Varick Avenue auto re-

pair shop and walked off with more than \$5,000-worth of electronics.

Laptop stolen

Burglars stole a \$1,200 laptop from a Wythe Avenue apartment on Feb. 6.

The 23-year-old tenant of the unit, between Broadway and South Eighth Street, said the iMac was still there when he left home at 5:30 p.m. When he returned just an hour later, it was gone.

— Dana Rubinstein

94th Precinct

Scammed

A kind-hearted Eckford Street resident who lent \$6,700 to a friend who said he needed it for a Green Card, discovered on Feb. 11 that he'd been scammed.

Cops collared the Queens-based scammer that same day.

Troubled corner

Beware the corner of Kent Avenue and North Fifth Street,

which was the site of two robberies last week.

In the first incident, someone swiped a 2001 Suzuki motorcycle from behind a building.

In the second incident, a thug made off with nearly \$3,000 worth of construction equipment after raiding a construction site at the same corner on Feb. 13.

Car stripped

A mom got more than she bargained for when her car got stripped while she was visiting her son.

The 52-year-old mom parked her gray 2004 Infinity G35 on Kent Street, between McGinness Boulevard and Provost Street, on Feb. 8 at 4:30 a.m.


When she returned on Feb. 12 at 2:30 p.m., she found that the driver's-side door lock had been broken and the vehicle had been stripped of its airbag, satellite map system, front dashboard, six-disc CD player and radio, gear shift, driver- and passenger-side head rests, fuse box and glove box.

— Rubinstein

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February 23/March 1, 2008

City puts 'Y' in Armory

By Dana Rubinstein

The Brooklyn Paper

It's official — the Prospect Park YMCA will operate the lavishly restored Armory in Park Slope, revealed city officials on Tuesday.

The YMCA will turn the 113-year-old building, which spans nearly an entire block between 14th and 15th streets and Seventh and Eighth avenues, into an adult fitness center and sports facility that will host teen and after-school activities, a day camp, and community meetings, operating between 7 a.m. and 11 p.m. every day.

The Y will generate revenue through donations, sponsorships, events and membership fees.

But when exactly the Armory will open for business is unclear. Though the city has selected the YMCA as its winning bidder, negotiations are ongoing, and city officials were reluctant to set a deadline.

Given the city's lack of success with former deadlines, that might be for the best.

After all, the city had promised to select a private operator for the facility in 2006. For the past few months, neighbors have been sneaking peeks into the Armory and have drooled over its \$16-million renovation. Many have questioned why the selection process was taking so long.

When The Brooklyn Paper revealed last month that the YMCA was one of two finalists, area residents were pleased.



Eighth Avenue's newly restored Armory will be operated by the YMCA.

"The YMCA is probably the best fit," said Tom Miskel, a member of the Park Slope Civic Council's Armory Committee. "This complex is directed toward sports programs for younger people. The Y fits that [mission] better than anyone else."

The Department of Homeless Services,

which is administering the bidding process and will maintain a 70-bed women's shelter in the building, pushed back the process at least twice.

For its part, the YMCA is "anxious to get started," said Kevin Shermach, a spokesman for the non-profit.

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Fifth Avenue novelty shop Nancy Nancy is closing.

Nancy Nancy is gone gone

By Dana Rubinstein

The Brooklyn Paper

Nancy Nancy — Fifth Avenue's favorite novelty shop — is the latest casualty of over-the-top real-estate prices in Park Slope.

"The landlord did not renew the lease because he's selling the building," said Nancy Sorkow, who opened the store, between President and Carroll streets, 10 years ago. "He's also doubling the rent."

So, come May, Sorkows will have to go elsewhere for their Axis of Evil finger puppets, their cat-bat magnets and their Jesus dolls ("With gliding action").

The closure of Nancy Nancy is the latest in a series of changes on Fifth Avenue, which was "pretty run down and deserted" when Sorkow opened shop, she said.

"Gentrification happened, and the landlords want to keep up I guess," she said.

Commercial rents on the suddenly upscale avenue average close to \$3,000-\$4,000 a month — and experts said that they're 50 to 100 percent higher than just five years ago.

As a result, the bell has also tolled for Biscuit BBQ, ROMP, Cocotte, Beso, Hollywood Video and even the Donut Cafe. "Let's hope that the vacant spaces are filled with new banks!" quipped a person calling himself "Raw" on the message board, brooklynian.com. "We need 24-7 access to more ATM machines with homeless people standing in front of them."

Sorkow said she plans to continue selling penis-shaped pepperoni and other goodies via her Web site, www.nancynancy.com.

Newark cop chase ends on Smith St.

No, it's not a movie shoot. A police chase that began in Newark, New Jersey, on Friday night really did come to a smash-filled conclusion on Smith Street. According to Newark cops, an officer who had stopped a suspected car thief had his gun stolen by the thief, who then took off and headed across the river, with cops in pursuit. After the two-state chase, the stolen sedan ended up going the wrong way down Smith Street and smashed into a van at Pacific Street before police finally leaped the driver. The driver of the van suffered minor injuries, cops said.



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Fire in the hole?

Navy will check if there is any ammo in them thar bay

The Brooklyn Paper

The Department of Defense will investigate whether live ammunition is still sitting in Gravesend Bay more than 50 years after it was accidentally dumped there — a key win for opponents of a city plan to put a garbage transfer station near the possibly explosive site.

The federal agreement to scour Navy archives comes just a month after Assemblyman William Colton (D-Brooklyn) dredged up the story of a barge that capsized in the bay in 1954, reportedly sending more than 200 tons of live ammunition to the bottom.

Colton and Rep. Vito Fossella (R-Bay Ridge) asked the Department of Defense to investigate. The feds complied.

"My office has already assembled a team, including our Naval historian, explosive ordnance experts, and the Army Corps of Engineers dredging experts, who are actively collecting this data," the Navy's Assistant Secretary BJ Penn said this week.

The waste-transfer station is a central element in Mayor Bloomberg's garbage plan, which the Council approved last year. A spokeswoman for the Department of Sanitation said that the city would take the results of the investigation into account.

Meanwhile, a noted environmental lawyer has joined Colton's crusade to stop the garbage-transfer station. Attorney Joel Kuyfman and Colton have called on the federal government to declare Gravesend Bay a "Superfund Site," citing over 30 years of illegal incineration at the defunct Southwest Brooklyn incinerator.

Any success on that front would result in a mandatory clean-up of the site, which would further delay the construction of the waste transfer station — possibly long enough to force the city to find a new site.

"Nothing short of an enormous environmental assessment and remediation program can help undo the damage that an illegal incinerator has done to Gravesend Bay for over 30 years," said Colton. — Rubinstein



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Pols claim that 'Victory' is at hand!

New stats show ER units need the beleaguered hospital

By Loren Bonner
for The Brooklyn Paper

New statistics from the city Fire Department show that the closing of Victory Memorial Hospital would seriously jeopardize health in Bay Ridge, a group of lawmakers said last week.

Councilman Vince Gentile (D-Bay Ridge), state Sen. Marty Golden (R-Bay Ridge) and

Rep. Vito Fossella (R-Bay Ridge) said that FDNY data shows that the closest emergency rooms to Victory Memorial are already overcrowded — a direct contradiction of data that the state Department of Health used when it decided last year to close Victory Memorial's emergency room.

The Department of Health says its data shows that two nearby hospitals, Lutheran

Medical Center and Maimonides Medical Center, have the capacity to receive ambulances that are currently going to Victory.

But the FDNY records come to a different conclusion. From October to December, 2007 — a study period — Maimonides, Lutheran, and other neighboring facilities declined themselves unable to receive new ambulances for hundreds of hours.

Maimonides was "on diversion" approximately 1,000 hours, while Lutheran was "on diversion" nearly 700 hours.

"If these hospitals are out of room and Victory is closed, there is no other option but to wait," said Gentile. "DOH can't play a game of roulette with people's lives."

Lawmakers have been arguing that Bay Ridge residents rely heavily on the emergency room at Victory Memorial. The group sued the state last year, demanding that the ER remain open.



The Ridge Three — Gentile, Golden and Fossella — back Victory.

"Local hospitals are already overburdened and will have a difficult time caring for an additional 17,000 patients who use Victory's ER every year," said Fossella.

But Claudia Hutton, a spokeswoman for the Department of Health, disputed the FDNY data. "The Fire Department doesn't use the same information that we use in calculating diversion," she said.

Hutton said the Department of Health's numbers are more accurate because they come directly from the hospital. She also said the state would continue with its plan to shutter Victory.

"We see Victory closing in June," she said.

But Victory's supporters refuse to give in.

"This compelling new data ... makes the strongest case possible for keeping the ER open at the Victory site," said Fossella.

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Si Dems want Harrison

By Dana Rubinstein
The Brooklyn Paper

Democrat Steve Harrison, who lost his bid to defeat the city's only Republican congressman two years ago, won the endorsement of the Democratic Organization of Richmond County in a landslide 22-3 vote over Democratic rival, Councilman Dominic Recchia, on Monday night.

Harrison also picked up the endorsement of the Staten Island Democratic Association by a 42-6 on Feb. 19.

The endorsements for the Bay Ridge attorney against 10-year incumbent Rep. Vito Fossella (R-Bay Ridge), go a long way toward cementing Harrison's candidacy against Recchia (D-Coney Island), who does not even live in the district in which he is planning to run.

Both Recchia and Harrison are competing at the bit to challenge Fossella, who is seen as particularly vulnerable in a



Steve Harrison

year when the presidential election is expected to energize Democratic voters to turn out in numbers far bigger than two years ago.

The Staten Island Democratic Association is an important progressive political club in a key portion of the conservative 13th congressional district, which encompasses Bay Ridge, Dyker Heights and all of Staten Island.

Recchia, who is term-limited as a Councilman, is expected to challenge Harrison in the September Democratic primary.

Recchia is leading Harrison in the all-important money race, having raised \$220,770 to Harrison's \$106,821. Fossella, for his part, is sitting on a campaign war chest of \$700,967, according to the most recent federal filings.

That said, Harrison, the former chair of Community Board 10, has shown he can do a lot with just a little money. In 2006, he took 43 percent of the vote, spending just \$130,000 to Fossella's \$1.7 million.

Frank Barbaro, who ran against Fossella in 2004, only won 41 percent of the vote. Barbaro, a former Gravesend Assemblyman and now the chair of the Democratic Party in upstate Orange County, endorsed Harrison in December,

citing his support "for an immediate withdrawal of the troops from Iraq, [for] national health insurance, [for] protecting social security, and [for] a women's right to choose."

Daniel Kadlin, who is handling Harrison's fundraising, sought to downplay Harrison's financial disadvantage.

"Harrison is doing very well in the grassroots sphere," said Kadlin, "as the election draws near, the on-line crew becomes more active. Solidly progressive candidates like Steve do very well in that world."

Recchia is under fire from political insiders for two main reasons: not only is he virtually unknown on Staten Island, which comprises the largest portion of the 13th congressional district, but he is widely perceived as a careerbagger.

He not only does not live in the district, but a Brooklyn Free Press analysis of his fundraising report reveals that the virtually all of his campaign contributors also live outside the district.

Another death at Ridge hotel

By Dana Rubinstein
The Brooklyn Paper

A hotel cleaning woman discovered the body of a 52-year-old man, his mouth covered in duct tape, in the bathtub of Room 221 at the Best Western Gregory Hotel in Bay Ridge on Monday afternoon, cops said.

It's the second suspicious death in two-and-a-half months at the Fourth Avenue inn. Cops responded to a 911 call at the hotel, which is between 83rd and 84th streets, at about 12:45 pm.

Once inside, they discovered the grisly scene — a bound dead body in the bathtub. Cops later identified the victim as Paul Mento, a resident of 71st Street.

A police spokeswoman said on Tuesday that the cause of death had yet to be determined.

Mento's is the latest corpse to turn up in the hotel, which has a reputation for catering to family members visiting residents of the quiet neighborhood.



The Gregory Hotel on Fourth Avenue.

On Dec. 3, a hotel employee discovered the body of 26-year-old David Diaz in his hotel room. He had been stabbed in the back and beaten about the head.

Like Mento, Diaz was not an out-of-

towner. Before his murder, he lived in a building on Fifth Avenue near 76th Street.

According to cops, Diaz had checked into the hotel the day before with a woman. He was never seen again alive, but the woman was spotted on surveillance video as she left the hotel hours after allegedly killing Diaz.

On Jan. 15, cops arrested Pamela Hanson, 20, and charged her with murder, grand larceny, petty larceny and criminal possession of a knife.

She claimed at her Feb. 20 arraignment that she acted in self-defense.

The manager of the hotel could not be reached for comment on Tuesday.

A local community leader, who asked not to be identified, said neighbors were shocked by the recent spate of suspicious deaths.

"I've never heard of that place as a short-stay kind of place," she said. "The Best Western is a reputation. You have people who have family members who stay there."

"Certainly having two events like this in a short period of time would lead to some concern," she added.

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City puts the 'Y' in Slope Armory

By Dana Rubinstein
The Brooklyn Paper

It's official — the Prospect Park YMCA will operate the lavishly restored Armory in Park Slope, revealed city officials on Tuesday.

The YMCA will turn the 113-year-old Eighth Avenue building into an adult fitness center and sports facility that will host teen and after-school activities, a day camp, and community meetings.

Spanning nearly an entire block between 14th and 15th streets, the Armory will be open seven days a week, from 7 am to 11 pm.

The Y will generate revenue through donations, sponsorships, events and membership fees.

But when exactly the Armory will open for business remains to be seen. While the city selected the YMCA as its "winning bidder," negotiations are ongoing and city officials were reluctant to set a deadline.

Given the city's lack of success with former deadlines, that might be for the best.

After all, the city had promised to select a private operator for the facility in 2006.

For the past few months, neighbors have been sneaking peeks into the Armory and have drooled over its \$16-million renovation. Many have questioned why the selection process was taking so long.



The YMCA will operate the Park Slope Armory.

When The Brooklyn Paper revealed earlier this month that the YMCA was one of two finalists, area residents were pleased.

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For its part, the YMCA is "anxious to get started," said Kevin Shermach, a spokesman for the non-profit.